Marxism Today

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THE Sun

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COR! WHAT A PAIR (OF DECADES)

EXCLUSIVE

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Sam... phew, what a scorcher!

Inside today

H2ORRIBLE! WAT-ER DISASTER

☆ Lusty barmaid Beryl has found the dirtiest pint in Britain – and it's WATER! Who's going to buy shares in this poisonous brew? See page 14.

☆ Saucy but safe! Today's teenagers do it without touching. Exclusive photos page 23.

☆ Berlin is busting out all over. The full story of the reds on the run page 32.

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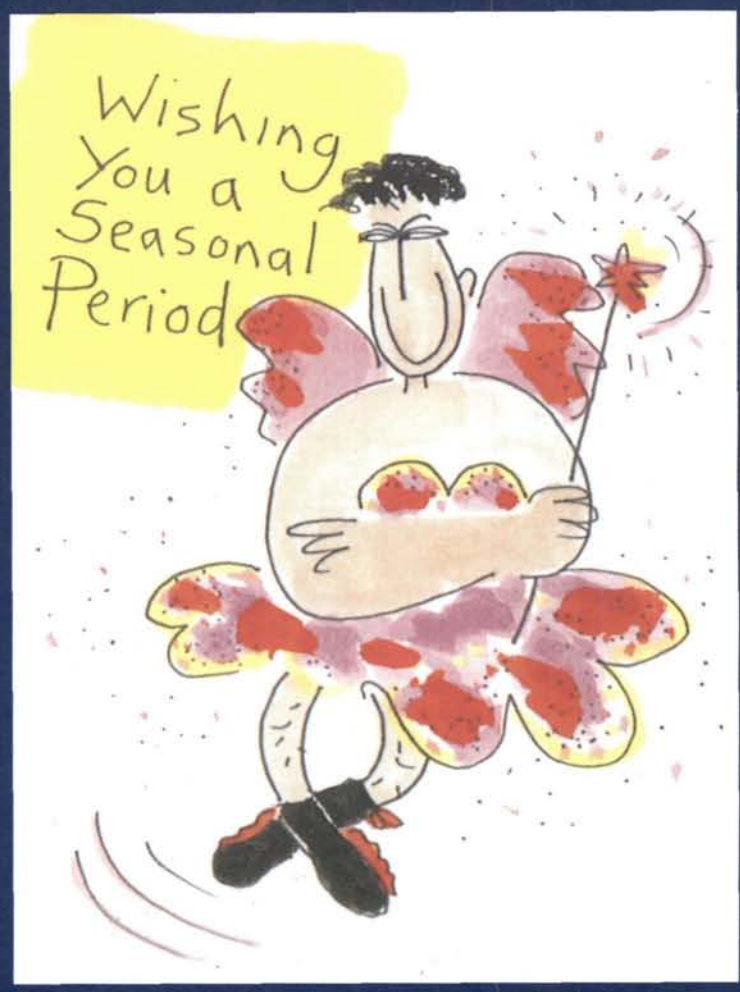

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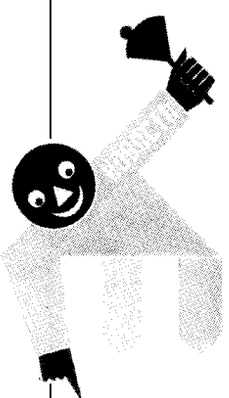

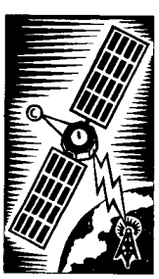

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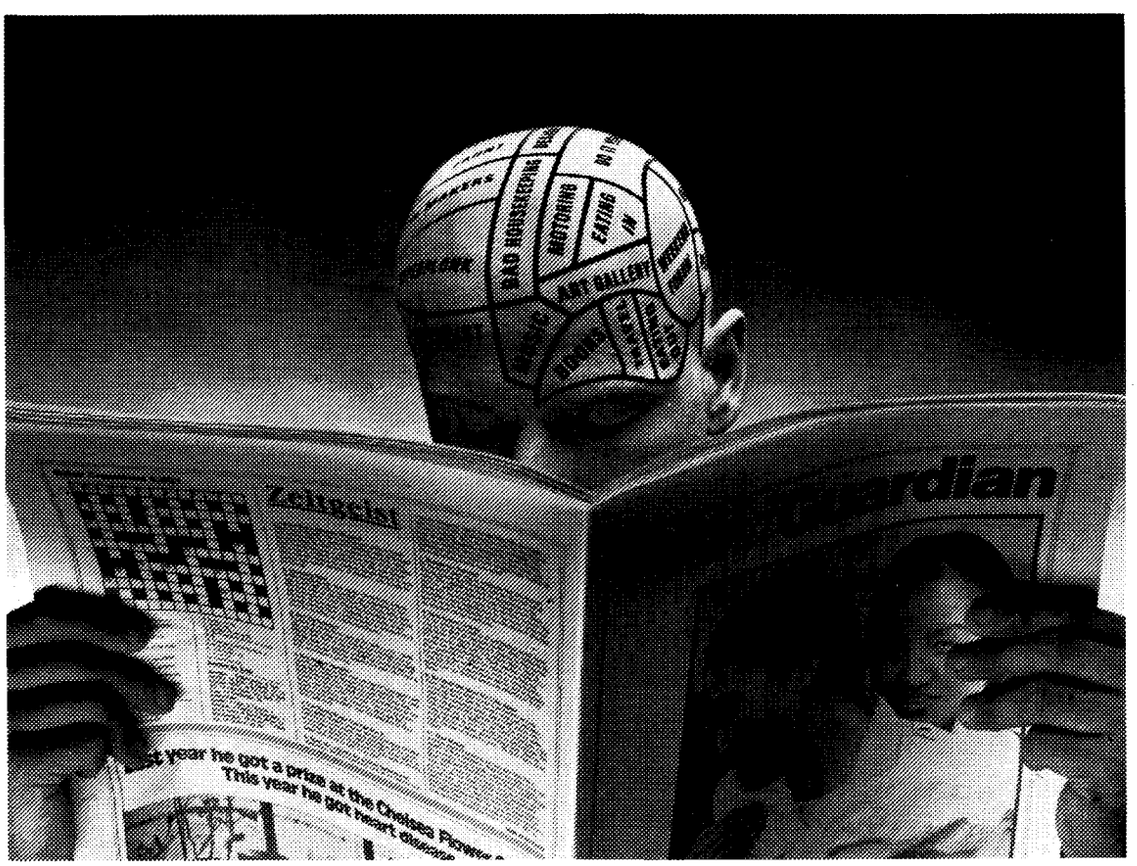

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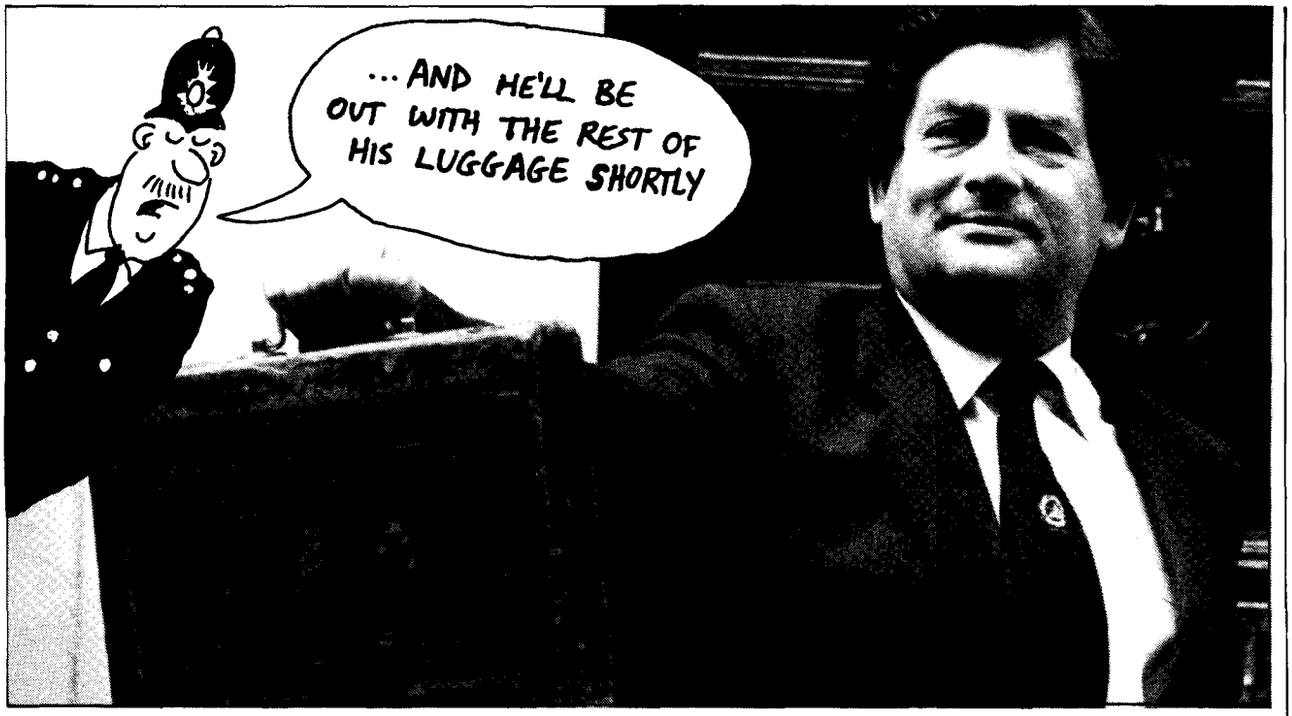
Bob Rowthorn counts the economic costs of Thatcherism

No Such Miracle



Nick Newman

Monitor

As Mark Twain might have said about Thatcherism, reports of its death are greatly exaggerated. But there is no doubt that Thatcherism is in terminal decline. The majority of the British people were never convinced by its extreme free-market policies, and hostility to them has been increasing apace as their social and economic costs become more visible. The huge balance-of-payments deficit, rising interest rates and persistent inflation all point to the failure of these policies to generate sustainable economic growth. Moreover, where there has been impressive growth, as in the south-east, the costs of unregulated expansion in terms of pollution, traffic jams, urban squalor and the like have undermined support even among the beneficiaries of Thatcherism.

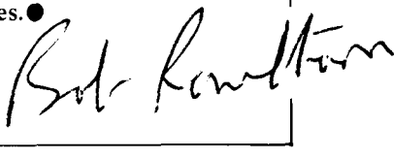
If the end of Thatcherism is in sight, what will be its eventual legacy? In the political sphere, its most enduring effect has been to transform the Labour Party into a continental-style social-democratic party. The hard Left has been marginalised in a way which seemed inconceivable 10 years ago, and the policy stance of the party is now broadly similar to that of the reviled SDP. Such a transformation would never have occurred without the trauma of Thatcherism.

Another enduring effect of Thatcherism will be to transform the trade unions, making them more accountable both to the law and to their own members. A future Labour government may reshape the legal framework of industrial relations, but it will certainly not restore the kind of immunities which the unions enjoyed previously, nor will it scrap the new regulations concerning union voting procedures.

In the economic sphere, the impact of Thatcherism has been less enduring. Despite all the media hype, there has been no industrial miracle and the old problems of the British economy have now re-emerged for all to see. Jeremiahs like myself have been vindicated. Within the space of a few months the mood has swung from euphoria to near-hysteria. Rising interest rates, accelerating inflation, falling investment, the huge balance-of-payments deficit and the recent sterling crisis all point to an impending recession. They are all symptoms of a fundamental weakness in the British economy.

The central problem is manufacturing industry. Ten years of neglect under the Thatcher regime have left Britain with a small and uncompetitive manufacturing sector, which is quite inadequate to meet the demands placed on it. Since 1979 UK expenditure on manufactured goods – cars, videos, machinery and the like – has risen by 30%. Over the same period production of manufactures has risen by a mere 12%. This disparity has led to a mushrooming deficit on manufacturing trade as imports flood into the country to bridge the gap between production and demand. Such a deficit would not matter if there was a way of permanently financing it with some other kind of revenue. But there is not. Exports of oil or services, for example, cannot possibly generate the kind of revenue required to cover a manufacturing deficit on the present scale of over £20 billion a year. Nor was there ever any prospect that they could do so. The once-fashionable idea that Britain could abandon manufacturing and live on oil and services was always a post-industrial fantasy with no foundation in reality. Britain needs a strong manufacturing sector and without one the country will be condemned to repeated crises of the type we are now facing.

In the past few weeks there has been much talk of Britain joining the European Monetary System (EMS). This, we are told, will take the pressure off sterling and allow the government to bring down interest rates, thereby avoiding the recession which is now staring the country in the face. This is complete nonsense. Entry into the EMS can certainly help to insulate Britain against panic selling of sterling. But it cannot insulate us against the effects of basic economic weakness. Inside or outside the EMS, Britain is heading for a recession and the going will be rough. Given the time-scale involved , the Tories have little scope for engineering a convincing pre-election boom, and the next election is likely to be fought against a grim economic background. While this may improve Labour's prospects of victory, it will also confront a future Labour government with some hard choices. ●



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DECEMBER 2, 6.

COTTESLOE
(MA RAINEY)

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The Good Person of Sichuan

BY BERTOLT BRECHT
IN A TRANSLATION BY
MICHAEL HOFMANN

THIS VIBRANT AND INTENSELY THEATRICAL TALE IS DIRECTED BY DEBORAH WARNER, MAKING HER DEBUT AT THE NATIONAL. FIONA SHAW PLAYS THE GOOD PERSON, SHEN TE, WHO IS REWARDED BY THE GODS BUT INCURS THE JEALOUSY AND GREED OF HER NEIGHBOURS.

Ma Rainey's BLACK BOTTOM

THE BRITISH PREMIERE
of a new play by August Wilson

Chicago 1927... legendary blues singer Ma Rainey (Carol Woods-Coleman) strives to preserve the integrity of her music in the world of the 'white' recording studios.

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In which **Paul Morley** is the Cheshire cat

Something Elsewhere

Hands up those of you who have watched *PSI* on afternoon television. This isn't a trick question. How many of you have seen *PSI*, presented by Chris Tarrant? This is a trickier question than: were we badly deceived when we were told that Fo descended among us from the fourth heaven in the shape of a white elephant? It isn't as tricky as the question: can consciousness go down a black hole? We'll save that for another panel game, Mr Chairman.

It was because of *PSI* that I nearly didn't make it here this month. Actually, there were many reasons why I nearly didn't make it this month. It all started at a meeting I attended titled *How Seriously Do You Take The Future?* I was on the panel, making a little speech that somehow seemed to incorporate Bill Cosby, Mary Gaitskill, Delight margarine, Charlotte Rampling and Paul Boateng's jacket, when a member of the audience interrupted me. 'I would be curious to know your principles', she asked me. I was surprised how quickly and confidently the answer came.

'They are, for instance,' I answered, as if I knew what I was talking about, 'to be a good husband, a good father, a good subject and a good gardener. I don't go beyond that, and I hope that God will have mercy on me.'

After such a reply, there was very little left for me to say. I went home, pale and shaken, and thought that maybe I could write a moving and serious little piece for the moving and serious *Marxism Today* about how there might still be things to care about in this post-Future world of copies and cop-outs. The article was going to be called 'I used to think not having an identity was a potential cause for suicide, then I thought that it was a really great way to live, and now I'm not so sure.' Just as I had typed out the title, *PSI* started.

I don't know about you, but I just had to watch. Six or seven sub, marooned celebrities have to try and guess the identity of other theoretically-famous people.

Colin Gray

To do this they ask each other questions like: if this person were a car, what make would it be? If this person were a magazine, what magazine would it be? If this person were a country, what country would they be? If this person were a character in *Alice In Wonderland*, which one would they be?

After a few minutes of this, I lost the will to write, to be a good gardener, to think. It wasn't clear whether this was because the programme made me realise how dangerous and stupid life can be, or because I was jealous that I would never make the fame necessary to appear on a show like *PSI*.

I was simultaneously horrified at the idea of sitting between Sue Pollard and Gyles Brandreth wondering what fruit Lionel Blair would be, but knew that these tv people had probably found a fascinating, sweeter-than-post-modern way to desensitise themselves from their own life. The people privileged and punished enough to guest on *PSI* live in a place where everything has been seen and done, and all that remains is *leaving the body*.

Before *PSI*, I was so sure that life was just a matter of being a good gardener, and going about one's business in the usual human way of daily impulse, blind faith. After *PSI*, I was sent back into a maelstrom of restlessness, where my thoughts somehow seemed to incorporate Mel Brooks, Sir Ian Gilmour, cyber-punk writing, Kylie Minogue and Marks and Spencers. There was no-one to interrupt me and ask me what my principles were. I couldn't write my article for *Marxism Today* about responsibility and goodness. All I could do was wonder, if I was a book, which one would it be? *Tarbuck On Showbiz*? Eco's *Travels In Hyperreality*? Cioran's *The Temptation To Exist*?

Even more troubling was that a member of the *PSI* panel was an old friend of mine. I know this person to be a good husband, a good gardener, a good father, and there he was, speaking the same language as Chris Tarrant, giddy with idiocy, high on survival, somehow sure of the future. I remember the pair of us swinging with hope at original punk-rock shows, and I wondered about what strange decisions and doubts had led him to *PSI* and me to *Marxism Today*. I guessed there was no real difference between us: we still had our own obsessions, and that was nothing to be ashamed of. In the end, our obsessions are to do with ourselves and the odd out-of-body experience. Some of us escape out of our anxiety, some of us escape into it. Finally, we meet at the same place.

This month, that place was the Elizabeth Taylor press conference. She was launching her purple *Passion* perfume at Selfridges, £125 for a few drops. I'd gone because, post-*PSI*, I was more stuck than ever for something to say. When you feel that you're at your most desperate,

'They ask each other questions like: If this person were a character in *Alice In Wonderland*, which one would they be?'

you can always rely on an Elizabeth Taylor press conference. 'Liz,' I shouted, after the man from the *Mirror* had asked her about alcohol and sex, 'Are we living in a period of post-history?' I was surprised how quickly and confidently the answer came: 'The prospect of a future which has no front lines must be confronted with courage – a radical and deeper courage than old Socrates, sucking his olive pips, thought was steadfastness before death. Otherwise we might get too scared to do anything. Afraid to dream, afraid to fail, afraid to follow your own road, your own gods: afraid to take a long shot to win on a wager, afraid to jaywalk, hitchhike, honky-tonk, bop, break or bark at the moon.'

Actually, I didn't ask that question, and she didn't give that answer. I really asked her: 'If you were a form of contraception, what form would you be?' I was thrown out of the conference. They must have thought I was a communist or something. Back home, I still had an article to write for *Marxism Today*. I decided to escape from my anxiety and review *PSI*. The first two lines were easy.

'I confess I'm openly receptive to this kind of hideous activity. Sometimes.'

Then I disappeared.●

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EYE TO EYE

Melissa Benn meets the 1990s' face of nursing

Caring Professional

Christine Hancock is the Royal College of Nursing's new general secretary

Yours is a pretty imposing office – in all senses. It's still relatively rare, even in this Thatcherite era, for a woman to take up a powerful public position. Do you have any role models?
I don't think I've ever consciously thought about it. When I first got the job, I had a letter from Brenda Dean, saying, 'Welcome to the very small club of trade-union leaders who are women'. But I do think the top job in nursing in the UK ought to be held by a woman. Trevor Clay, my predecessor, upset a few people by saying that he hoped he would be succeeded by a woman.

Am I right in thinking that the significant changes for nursing in the 1990s will be 'Project 2000' – the reform of nurses' education – and the government health service review white paper?
Yes. I think the big challenge is to put nursing in this country on to a more credible educational footing without losing the unique strengths of its practical skills. At the moment the tradition in this country is literally to drop nurses in it – let them learn by experience. That's why 30% never qualify and why wastage is so high. Project 2000 will provide a much stronger higher-education and theoretical base.

However, I do think it's essential to recognise that the so-called menial aspects of nursing are often crucially important to the patient. If you're incontinent, there's nothing more important to you than somebody who can deal with you sensitively. And highly-qualified nurses have to know how to do that too.

The problem with the government's white paper is knowing what it really means. Those nurses who have read and thought about it are extremely worried. In theory the proposed reforms could be alright. You could have this financially-skilled, compassionate manager whose only concern is the health of his population, who pays his staff better and really looks after them ... There's nothing in the white paper that says that can't happen – it's just that on balance most of us believe it's not going to be like that.

But even if you were ideologically committed to the white paper, the sheer volume of change being proposed makes it totally unachievable. The people, the technology, the information, the managerial ability, are just not there.

The BMA's campaign against the health service review has been very visible but I don't actually know what the RCN's position is.
We have had a strong public position. We have not spent nearly £2m, but we've concentrated on raising our members' awareness, getting them to talk to MPs. I think every MP in the country will be contacted by an RCN branch at some stage. But the campaign has only just started. The RCN has joined with the BMA in public meetings which have been amazingly attended. Places like St Albans and Shrewsbury – hardly radical-left areas – have had 500-600 turning up. People are really angry and worried, particularly the elderly. My staff have told me about blue-rinse ladies with posh voices pushing their stroke-ridden husbands in wheelchairs, really worried by what it means.

Are you a feminist?
I don't even know what a feminist is!

Well, how would you describe it? Being interested in women's issues?
I didn't think very much about women's issues when I was a nurse. It was going into management that made me start thinking that the issues of nursing are closely intertwined with women's issues: not having a voice, the male dominance in senior health-service management, and how it's women who are always there, coping, unsung.

I've spent the last four or five years in a male-dominated culture feeling really quite offended by the talk of 'the chaps', and the assumptions about the amount of business that can be done in the pub in the evening, rather than doing the shopping or going home to the kids. There's always some little woman there, when the doctor rings up from the pub: 'Just finished operating, dear, I'm on my way home ... '. Operating on a pint of lager! Those are certainly things I feel strongly about.

So how will you be feminising the RCN?
I don't know of many people working here part-time or job-sharing. We cannot complain that the health authorities and government aren't doing anything to help married women return to work or keep their jobs if we behave like them ourselves.

What worries me even more are issues of disability and ethnic minorities. At a recent meeting of the International Council of Nurses it really struck me that North America, the Caribbean and East Africa have the most outstanding articulate black nurses – we have no role models for our black nurses. That's about how racist our society is.

I know that nurses' pay is higher now than it's been for a long time, but compared to doctors' pay, there's still a world of difference. What about equal pay for work of equal value?
The evidence we have put to the pay review body this year has emphasised low pay. Although nurses are doing better, 36% are still below the European 'decency threshold'.

They're poor ...
They're very poor, yes. Because they're doing devalued jobs, women's jobs. But I think the equal pay argument gets difficult. It's hard to compare nurses to doctors in an exact way.

You are also on record as wanting to bring in more of the lower-paid nursing staff into RCN membership. Do you foresee conflict between representing their interests and those of the very highly-skilled, well-paid end of the profession?
No. It has always been one of the challenges of the RCN to represent a very broad range of people. If you talk to the regional nurses, they say, 'We pay our money every year, the College doesn't do anything for us, and it's wildly radical'. And if you talk to state enrolled nurses they'll tell you it's dominated by nurses in management and they don't feel safe because their manager's in the RCN. If we upset both ends, maybe we get it right.

Last year's regrading dispute gave us a new public image of nurses, didn't it? Angry young women with punk hair and Doc Martens ...
I do think the image varies enormously with people's personal experiences. I suspect people still overwhelmingly think of something a bit like Florence Nightingale, with a neat cap and apron – even though she wasn't really like that: she was a tough old bird, not the sweet kind soul with the lamp. But what I would hope is that more people now think of nurses as having a health image rather than a sickness image.

What do you mean?
Things like midwifery, health visiting, psychiatric nursing, preventative aspects of health care.

You do have a bit of a reputation for being a public-health person. Have you banned smoking in your office?
No. But I don't think anybody has smoked in here. I do feel quite strongly about health-type things: food, smoking, alcohol. For instance, I don't believe we should provide alcohol for people who we are doing business with over lunch. I nearly died of lack of oxygen from all the smoking at the Labour Party Conference. And it's not just a matter of individual

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Jeremy Grayson

freedom, the evidence is now much stronger than it's ever been that passive smoking does affect other people's health. But there's a lot of cowardice and stupidity over taxation. You could certainly cut smoking by half – both tobacco and booze are very price-sensitive.

What did you think about Edwina Currie's comments on chips and northerners as an example of how to educate people?
Clearly on one level she failed because she upset so many people, and yet I think everybody in the health-education business really mourned her going. She was the only politician who really put health on the agenda. I have a theory that there was a lot of sexism in the way Edwina Currie was treated, because her whole style and stance was a very female way of behaving.

Do you watch Casualty?
I ought to more than I do, but I do watch it if I'm in on a Friday. It's a good way of seeing what a large number of people think nursing is about.

But it's an ever-so-anxious picture of the health service, isn't it? It gives the impression of something that's falling apart, only held together by a lot of under-rewarded dedication.
Clearly, there are many things that are better than they used to be in the NHS – conditions, new ways of working – and yet it really does feel very demoralised and very stretched.

If I could wave a magic wand, I'd invest very strongly in the physical fabric. I think our hospital buildings are a disgrace; there's nowhere else in the world I know of where you are expected to lie in a room of 30 people when you are ill. The lack of small rooms and privacy and dignity and peace and quiet is a scandal.

And pay. I'd invest phenomenally strongly in valuing nurses, and other workers in the health service. Things like staff accommodation, assisted mortgage schemes, staff support schemes. I mean, we don't even provide counselling and support systems for 20-year old nurse students who are dealing with people their own age who are dying of cancer. We just expect them to survive and do it.

What do you do when you go home at night?
Eating, talking with friends, being with people. I take work home if it has to be done, but I'm quite good at switching off.

So you're not like Margaret Thatcher or those awful people who claim to need only four hours' sleep?
I wish I was in a way. Think of the extra time I would have!●

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Wines of Westhorpe
– for more wine value

RED WINE OF THE YEAR

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Forum 5:	Another Internationalism – a new trade-unionist Strategy
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Forum 7:	The Risk-society and Political Ecology
Forum 8:	"Third World" and 1992: Five Centuries of Colonialism
Forum 9:	Post-war Structures – the End of Yalta?
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Summing-up:	Foundation Stones of a "European Model of Civilisation"?
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Further information regarding the preparatory state of this conference is available on request
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Martin Kettle unravels Greece's strange alliances

Greek Unorthodoxy

One of these days it might be creepily fascinating to hear a *Mastermind* contestant attempt a specialist subject on communist participation in Western European governments 1945–89. Looking at the generally sorry political state of most Western communist parties today, it takes some effort to remind oneself just how often they have actually had temporary toeholds in government.

For, if there has been any pattern to such communist participation then it has been of the parties' weakness. Broadly speaking, apart from the immediate postwar years, communist parties have entered governments as junior – often very junior – coalition partners and have not lasted long before being marginalised, mostly by large social-democratic parties.

Possibly the most extraordinary example yet of this esoteric branch of modern European history is currently being acted out in Greece. The unique circumstances of communist government participation in Greece sound a cautionary note against the temptation to conclude that it can never be in a communist party's interest to join a government which it does not dominate. Elections on November 5 will provide the verdict.

On June 18 this year, a general election called to coincide with the European Parliament elections unseated Andreas Papandreou's eight-year old socialist Pasok government in Greece. It was replaced, after every other inter-party permutation had been explored, by a left-right coalition between the dominant conservative New Democracy alliance and Communist-dominated Coal-ition Of The Left And Progress.

To understand how such a compromise, historic by the standards even of historic compromises, could be struck, it is necessary to understand the very peculiar position occupied by Pasok and the particular crisis facing it after eight years in power.

Pasok had come to power in 1981 on a programme of militant left populism. It was a period of apparently general leftist advance throughout Europe, yet even for those days, Pasok was something different, its rhetoric unrivalled by any Western socialist government in modern times. Pasok was hugely anti-Nato, anti-American, anti-EC. It promised a realignment of Greece with the East and the middle-East, support for the Palestinians and, above all, rapid economic expansion.

By this year, the Pasok experiment was in total crisis. The great international realignment of which Papandreou had preached was in tatters. Moscow played cool with Pasok from the start and with the rise of Gorbachev had become positively wary of Papandreou. The flirtation with militant Arab politics continued – Greece still refuses to extradite terrorist suspects – but there was also a cautious rapprochement with Israel. Relations are quieter not only with the EC but even with the great traditional enemy, Turkey. American bases remain. Cyprus is unavenged. And above all, the Greek economy is in crisis.

But it is the key extra factor of corruption, not unknown in other European countries but somehow seemingly endemic in Greece, which provided both the catalyst to destroy the Pasok era and the bond to cement the remarkable government which replaced it after June 18.

Fundamentally, the crisis in Greece is the crisis of Pasok. Unable or unwilling to translate its rhetoric into policy, forced to deflate and to integrate its economic strategy more closely with the EC, too willing (like all Greek parties) to use its power for sectarian manipulation and personal gain, and excessively in thrall to the discredited Papandreou dynasty, Pasok's chances of survival in its present form must now seem dubious.

For Pasok as, in different contexts, for the British Labour Party and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the road to social democracy is paved with difficulties.

For the Left Coalition, the problems are very different. Two decades ago, Greece's Communist Party split into a dominant stalinist party and a smaller Eurocommunist wing. The Left Coalition marked an important rapprochement between the two traditions, partly imposed by the exigencies of Greece's electoral system and partly facilitated by a moderating of the stalinist KKE's hostility to the mixed economy. Its experience in government has unquestionably put the coalition on the map as an effective force, whether or not it even attempts or is able to form a new alliance with New Democracy after the November poll.

The left-right government, under the compromise leadership of a former conservative backbencher, Tzannis Tzannetakis, cannot really be seen as a long-term model. It came into being for one immediate purpose alone: to allow corruption and abuse of power investigations and, if necessary, prosecutions against Pasok leaders, including Papandreou. Its programme was simple – *katharsis* – a clean-up of Greece's political scandals and it set itself a strictly limited time in which to achieve it.

The left-right *katharsis* programme has now been completed, to all-round amazement in view of the legacy of mutual mistrust, not to say hatred, between the coalition partners dating from the 1946–49 civil war in which they were armed opponents. Its work done, the Conservative-Communist coalition resigned at the start of October to prepare for the fresh poll on November 5.

'Communist parties entering governments as junior coalition partners have not lasted before being marginalised'

Whatever happens then, it would be unfair to depict the events of 1989 as preeminently a crisis for Greek communism. Even if it loses out in the second election, as it well may, the communist Coalition's role in government has unquestionably vindicated two things: its separate existence throughout the Pasok years as well as the decision by both stalinists and Eurocommunists to cooperate in electoral politics under the Coalition banner.

In the 6th century BC, the Greek writer Heraclitus famously observed that a man can never step into the same river twice. That profoundly dialectical insight may be of some consolation to Greek communism as it searches for a more permanent role in the country's highly-unstable political spectrum.●

Nick Kobyluch

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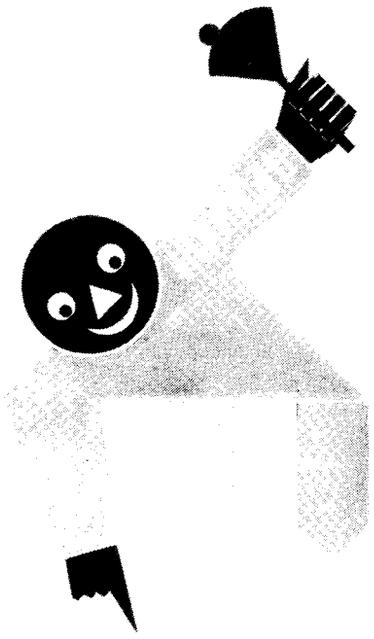
PREVIEW

Ann Kodicek surveys Glasgow's glasnost art season

East End Openings

'Only true Russian painters can work like this in the shade over the years, without their true worth being recognised. They have a great love of work and faith in the future, even while remaining unknown, sometimes until death...'. So wrote the production artist Alexander Rodchenko of his teacher Vladimir Tatlin in 1941. It was as much a prophesy for himself as for Tatlin. A part of what it foresaw is the first Western exhibition in Glasgow's Art Gallery from the Rodchenko Family Workshop.

During the 'years of stagnation' (the period from Stalin until the end of the Brezhnev era), 1920s' revolutionary avant-garde was not altogether stifled. After Rodchenko's death in 1956, it was still possible to visit the extensive Rodchenko Archive located at his Moscow apartment. Even works by Malevich, though not exhibited, were at least not destroyed.



Rodchenko: Avant-garde

Student art: New pluralist styles on display in Glasgow

Suddenly, the avant-garde is in again. Innovations in Russian and Soviet art from 1898 until the present day can be observed throughout November at '*New Beginnings*': a comprehensive festival of unprecedented breadth of all the Soviet arts.

What makes the current Soviet art scene a maelstrom is the sudden introduction of a plurality of styles. For the first time since 1930, artists who do not belong to the official Union are legally permitted to work. There is no such thing as an 'unofficial' artist or unofficial art. Socialist realism, the didactic party style which was the only form of art permitted before 1986, is no longer compulsory.

Soviet artists now are seeking, after years of official doublespeak, an artistic language in which to express hitherto-unspoken truths. The new avant-garde is represented in *New Beginnings* by a number of painters, sculptors and graphic artists, many of whom produced their exhibition material on site at the venue several weeks before the official opening.

These artists have grown up in a tradition of cultural isolation in a repressed and highly-political environment. Most of their work has been heavily informed by that background. Suddenly they have been unleashed. They travel the world. They have seen capitalism and all its works. They are lionised by curious Westerners. Finally, they are shut up in the relatively-neutral environment of an empty studio in Glasgow. What kind of work will they produce?

The effects of stylistic and ideological pluralism in the USSR art scene are not exclusively positive. Thirty-four-year old Sergei Shutov, who has been called 'a rock star among younger artists' was recently in conversation in London with an older artist whose father had been

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shot by Stalin.

'I'm sorry I wasn't killed in the war,' said Shutov acerbically. 'I'm sorry I don't remember the purges. But nonetheless I have a problem. I'm trying to produce good Russian art. That too is a responsibility.'

Shutov produces vigorous, ironic, semi-abstract paintings where values are questioned visually through religious and political slogans. Like many of his generation, he feels needled by the implied reproaches of the older generation that he is callous, egotistical and softened by lack of struggle.

Shutov's other preoccupation is with aesthetic values. He is saddened by the seemingly-wilful inability of

Lithuanian theatre premiere

Western dealers and critics to discern between good and bad Soviet art. The situation has encouraged unscrupulous Soviet pragmatists to jump on the commercial bandwagon.

There are two kinds of bandwagoners at the moment: former stalinists who hope once more to ingratiate themselves by toeing the line of perestroika; and 'folk artists': pasticheurs who produce mawkish canvases containing a mishmash of 'Russian' ingredients for the popular market: icons, wooden matroishka dolls, heroes of Old Rus in mediaeval battledress, Nobel prizewinners, topless girls, Lenin and Jesus. They sell like hotcakes even in the Kremlin. They have been received with disgraceful acclaim by critics in the West who would not even have glanced at such shoddy work by Western artists. Shutov fears that the consequent flooding of the market with meretricious Soviet art will smother the new culture before it is out of its infancy.

Shutov is now in demand in the USA and all over the West. To remain a Russian artist, he must remain true to Russian cultural tradition and resist commercial Western influences. At the same time, he wants to broaden his horizons. He therefore disagrees with former 'unofficial' artists who wish to retain their exclusiveness, feeling that their refusal to meet the real world will make for an arcane, impoverished art without universal reference. In Glasgow, Shutov expresses his own search in a one-person show at the Barbizon Gallery.

The traditional Russian culture of overlap between art forms remains strong and contributes to its fertility. Like the futurist poet Mayakovsky, many artists write poetry and vice versa. The nearest modern equivalents to the futurists are the artist-poets Prigov and Sorokin. The latter will contribute to the festival at a literary reading.

Other literary events, together with a wide range of background lectures and discussions, will give a good insight into the current political climate. Occasionally, the new freedom afforded by glasnost makes for works which are artistically hidebound by villification of Stalin and other political recriminations. At their worst, some new Soviet plays and, to a lesser extent, films, can look like high-school productions by fifth-formers getting back at the prefects. But there is real new talent coming up fast in the USSR. The results are exhilarating to watch.●

Peter Scott finds a nation misrepresented

Hungary plc

Royal patrons, a £200,000 sponsorship campaign launched in the presence of Margaret Thatcher and Imre Pozsgay to net companies such as Allied Lyons, the *Daily Mail*, ICI, Price Waterhouse and Trusthouse Forte...

A mass of concerts, exhibitions of Hungarian art nouveau, Herend porcelain, photography and various crafts, a retrospective of Hungarian cinema from 1948 to the present, ballet, theatre, shopping. The Polgár sisters playing chess and demonstrations of Rubik's puzzles...

This is 'Magyarok: Britain Salutes Hungary'. Billed as the largest British celebration of Hungarian arts and culture in 80 years, staged at the Barbican and other venues from October 25 to November 21.

It could have been explosive: Hungarian history reads like a showcase for revolutions through the ages. And what's more, Hungarian art in the 19th and 20th centuries has tended to link individual experiment and imagination to social responsibility and criticism. (How frustratingly right-wing literary modernists like Eliot, Joyce, Yeats and Pound are, compared to their Hungarian counterparts!)

For instance, a semi-secret perestroika was happening in Hungary long before it was invented in the Soviet Union. How interesting it would have been to have surveyed the art produced out of this social turmoil. And even more interesting to have had the chance to compare and contrast it with the art of an earlier reconstruction under Habsbury domination at the turn of the century.

Instead, we're offered a supermarket of Hungarian goodies temptingly packaged but selected with no apparent logic other than 'market forces'. So the prevailing impression is that many of the exhibitions and events have been chosen because they were available rather than to fulfil a need.

In the absence of any organising theme, this is a 'privatising' festival, saluting various individual Hungarians taken out of context, rather than their culture. It's symptomatic that each chosen artist gets hyped. János Pilinszky is billed as 'Hungary's greatest 20th-century poet', Sir George Solti is its outstanding conductor, György Kurtág its leading contemporary composer, as if to sell us a mythology of a *race* of super-talented individuals. They're good, but not that good.

The great shame of the individualist approach is that we're presented with a cosy, depoliticised and, to my mind, narrow caricature of Hungary. There isn't the space here even to list the great variety of less-familiar, socially-committed art that we could have been shown. This celebration tries to be so blandly neutral that it offers no challenge to a complacent view of a Hungary which is picturesque, full of sensitive souls and eccentric individuals, but which has been robbed of any distinctive Hungarian identity.

There are plenty of interesting classical concerts (I can't wait to hear Yuri Bashmet playing Bartók's Viola Concerto, for instance). But the great majority of them focus upon Bartók, Kodály, Liszt and Haydn, who surely need no introduction. And in the case of Kodály, you'd never know from the choice of works presented in this festival that his major achievement was to refuse the role of just another 'great composer' and instead dedicate his life's work to reorganising musical life and teaching so as to make music accessible to people. Why couldn't a more comprehensive view of the range of Hungarian music-making have been smuggled on to more mixed programmes?

All this leaves the two main visual arts exhibitions interestingly out on a limb. The 'Four Poster Ages' and 'A Golden Age' exhibitions look to be stunning and revealing collections of Hungarian art and culture: half-familiar and half-exotic. And all (to judge by the accompanying book) presented in the light of the contradictory social realities out of which this art sprang. If only the rest of the events had been organised with the same degree of intelligent argument and analysis.

In summary, many exciting events: but also a sadly-wasted opportunity. You get glimpses of the real diversity and conflicts of Hungarian culture amid the more deferential and touristic. Shop carefully!●

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Building Blocs

Missing Link

From Mark Fisher, shadow minister for arts and the media

In the debate about the quality and future of British architecture, discussed by Dick Hebdige (*MT* October) there is one voice missing: that of the government, or, more precisely, the prime minister. She is not known as a shy, retiring flower, so this omission must be full-blooded indifference. Has anyone seen the plans for 'our Dulwich retirement home'? Does it have an architect?

Not that anyone is suggesting it is the job of government to have or approve an architectural style. Following the vainglories of Mussolini or Stalin, the thought of a rampant Thatcher aesthetic chills the blood. But there are several areas in which government ought to have a proper and constructive approach towards architecture: economic and fiscal climate which encourages new building, and, not least, the setting of an example by commissioning new work.

In all of these, the Thatcher years have been a decade of neglect and missed opportunity. Capital has been pumping into the country, like a daily pools win from the North Sea, but what have we built? An (uncompleted) British Library and the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre (and now that proposed monument to pomposity and paranoia, the Downing Street Gates). The opportunities lost, in unbuilt homes, universities, libraries, theatres, hospitals, are legion. Less apparent, but more damaging in the long term, has been the failure to invest in architectural training. What buildings will we bequeath to our grandchildren if we don't value and foster young architects?

The prime architectural achievements of the Thatcher years are the shopping mall and the out-of-town retail park. Almost every city has one of these temples to credit-card culture, shop fronts for the tidal wave of imported goods which have left us with a £19 billion balance-of-payments deficit.

There is perhaps one major reason why Mrs Thatcher hasn't weighed into the increasingly-polarised debate between Prince Charles and Richard Rogers: both of them recognise that, aesthetics apart, no architecture is possible without planning laws, while she and the late unlamented Nicholas Ridley have turned the Department of the Environment into a planning joke, a poodle of developers. In architecture, the free market means free rein for architectural gems like the hangars erected by Toys R Us.

Architecture cannot be divorced from all ideas of society. It is, after all, the most communal and unavoidable of the arts. But we know Mrs Thatcher cannot stomach 'society' as a concept. Does this explain her uncharacteristic silence?

No progress is likely to be made until government, both central and local, accepts that architecture is a key political, as well as a cultural, subject. In the meantime, what the rest of us must do is to join with Richard Rogers in convincing the Prince of Wales that British architects *can* produce imaginative solutions, which reflect and rise out of our own time, and not just mimic the styles of the past.●

Design Dogma

From Janet Abrams, architectural critic for The Independent and Blueprint

Dick Hebdige brought a refreshing objectivity to the 'great architectural debate', and his lucid analysis of the often-contradictory values lurking beneath the tide of rhetoric was, as usual, exemplary.

As an architectural critic (semi-retired!) I have been quite stumped when friends casually enquire what I think of Prince Charles' views, since I find it difficult to produce pat verdicts on buildings in the 99%-preferred 'monstrous carbuncle' or 'nuclear-power station' royal vein.

Having watched the debate both within the profession and in wider cultural circles from either side of the Atlantic, I am frankly despairing at the simplistic battle lines between 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' that seem to have been drawn up of late. Not to mention alarmed at the second world war metaphors which the Prince has deployed to characterise British architects as the enemy within.

With some notable exceptions, the debate to date has been breathtakingly trivial, since a false dichotomy has been established between two camps whose differing aesthetic preferences may mask certain underlying sympathies.

But the predominantly tabloid level of discussion effectively throttles at birth any exploration of the complex issues at stake: either you are for Him, or against. Thus Richard Rogers has been depicted as the Prince's opponent, when all he has sought to do is counterbalance the assertions of an individual whose exceptional status lends his 'personal view' the tenor of universal truth.

As a result of the Royal intervention, it is virtually impossible to avoid being pushed into a position of defending one camp or the other: modern versus traditional.

Having hit out at specific projects, and isolated individual architects for villification, it was to be hoped that the Prince might show greater depth of insight when he came to write his book. Instead he chose to justify his targeting of the architectural profession by arguing that there had been a conspiracy by postwar modernist architects to despoil the British urban landscape.

This kind of retrogressive rhetoric simply sets the public debate back several notches, and obscures the vigorous reassessment of modernism – its ambitions, failings and achievements – which has been going on within the architectural world for at least two decades. The diversity of architectural styles employed today reflects a renewed awareness of history as well as the uncertainty within the profession about the appropriate expression of much broader cultural changes.

Just as modernism was a far from monolithic attempt to grapple with dynamic social and technological consequences of the industrial revolution, so the turbulence within architecture today is an expression of the conflicts arising from the information revolution, particularly concerning the definition of the public realm.

Prince Charles' poignant exhortations about human values in the built environment are not to be dismissed lightly, but he is under an illusion if he believes that by ordaining a certain style of architecture, a certain style of harmonious social organisation will necessarily follow. The polarisation of the current debate threatens to divert attention from the underlying social issues at stake, and to lead only to the substitution of one aesthetic dogma for another.●

Rising Sun

Shouldn't it be 'Sun*rise* In The East' (*MT* October)? After the nightmare of Stalin, the false dawn of Khrushchev and the complacent snore of Brezhnev, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have been jolted to a rude awakening. It isn't to the sunshine of prosperity but there's sufficient light around for people to see the Orwellian landscape of their lives rather than hallucinating the never-never land of socialist realism. And communists in the West can begin to say the unsayable – as Martin Jacques did last month.

We cannot afford to carry around the thoughts of anybody (not Lenin, not Marx) as if they embody truths for all seasons and all times. All theories are partial, fallible, open to criticism and reconstruction; especially in the realm of politics. Lenin didn't do it the way Marx imagined it. Is it too difficult for us to digest the truth that we can't do it the way Lenin imagined it?

It is no longer possible or desirable (if it ever was) for any political party to act as the vanguard for the whole human race, to take and exercise power *on behalf of* the 'masses'. We cannot prescribe the future according to an all-encompassing narrative of necessary development. We must break out of the closed circuit of traditional political discourse which traps us in a deformed practice. Politics isn't about fine theoretical squabbles or fixed programmes of action to be delivered to the last dot and comma.

I'm not arguing against theory. Far from it. We need a far deeper and more subtle understanding of the desires and forces that move us to think and act in society and make history. We have not yet found an authentic democracy – so the vast majority in our *own* society (never mind Eastern Europe) have yet to make their debut on the political stage.

Many in the West imagine that the Soviet bloc is just 'catching up' with Western democracy. I suspect that, sooner or later, we shall learn a thing or two from them about such matters as, for instance, the relationship between political power and culture. There are huge creative (though undoubtedly also some destructive) forces stirring again in the East. In many ways, this sunrise heralds a dawn for us all.●

John Salway, Sheffield

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Ulster's Inbuilt Majority

Feeling British

What a breath of fresh air it was to read John Lloyd's perceptive article on Northern Ireland (*MT* August). Gone was the partial support for the Catholic republicans and the portrayal of Ulster Unionists as akin to white South Africans, taking delight in oppressing the natives and exploiting and discriminating against them.

It was good to see Lloyd appreciate that the unionist case is legitimate and progressive and not irrational, colonialist and reactionary. Physically, culturally and historically Ulster is different from the Irish Republic and most of its citizens feel as British as the Geordies, Merseysiders or Glaswegians do. There is nothing socialist or progressive about depriving 1m people of their British identity and submitting them to the rule of a state pervaded by the ethos and views of the Catholic Church and an alien Gaelic culture which is hostile to the Ulster/British tradition in Ireland.

John Lloyd has added an important element to the new times theme: the heyday of Orangeism and Provisionalism has passed, and humane and progressive people must encourage UK parties to organise in Ulster to help break the current stalemate. The Left should move rapidly to ensure Labour is at the forefront of this historical process.●

Laurence Davidson, Belfast.

Old Wine

John Lloyd in 'Ulster's Age Of Majority' (*MT* August) makes the fantastic assertion that what is really needed is for the mainstream British parties to compete in Ulster elections.

The problem in Ulster is not one of political labels but of political issues. Who cares if the Tory Party runs in Northern Ireland if it is just the OUP wearing a new hat? If a majority in Northern Ireland is in favour of mainland parties organising there, it is probably the same majority as votes OUP or DUP in the elections; the same majority as insists on British nationality and marches up and down thumping the lambegs on July 12 every year. Naturally this majority has an interest in the 'normalisation ' of Ulster and the presentation of the minority as a marginalised, disloyal and superstitious mob of half-barbarians, who cannot or will not loyally incorporate themselves into the British political mainstream.

A British government can force the pace of change, but only in one way: by removing the territorial guarantee on which loyalism depends. Whatever terrible violence such a decision might unleash, it would at least end the Irish question decisively. The historical development of the different social forces involved has made violence inevitable in Ireland, and violence will be an inherent part of any solution to the problem.

There is only one progressive policy for any British government in Ireland. That is to get out.●

Alastair McCapra, Sussex

No Way Out

Paddy Coulter's article 'No Port In A Storm' (*MT* September) gives overdue exposure to the discrete tightening of asylum regulations in a Europe 'without frontiers', but does not fully convey the scale of restrictions already in force.

Since the Carriers' Liabilities Act came into force in 1987, nearly £12m has been collected in fines from airlines which have brought migrants to this country who were then refused asylum status. That means an average of over 10 people *every day* are judged not to have a sufficient fear of persecution to flee their country and come to Britain.

As Paddy points out, only a small proportion of refugees ever seek asylum in the industrialised countries. The fear is that when airlines and shipping firms are compelled to fork out millions for taking someone whose case is later rejected, that percentage may diminish still further.

With carriers already taking steps to discourage asylum-seekers at the point of departure, it is only to be expected that non-industrialised countries currently bearing the brunt of refugee crises like Sudan or Malawi abandon their more sympathetic attitudes and shut their doors along with the West. And that leaves the refugees with nowhere to go.●

David Charap, London

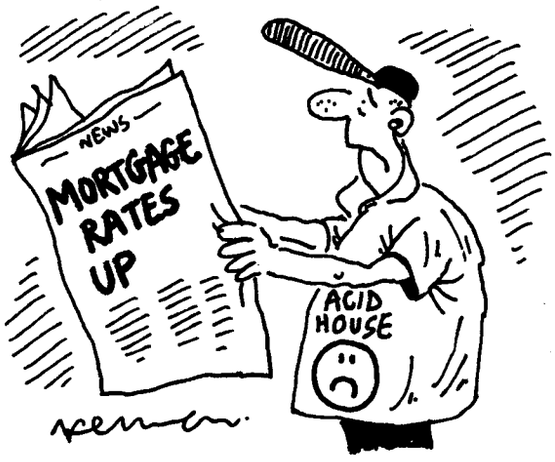
Vietnam Rights

In drawing attention to the plight of the Vietnamese currently in Hong Kong camps and detention centres (*MT* September) Paddy Coulter misses one fundamental point.

The Vietnamese people are forbidden to leave their country without permission, granted via a complicated series of committees and reliant on favours and influence. There is no right to a passport. Leaving Vietnam unofficially is a specific political crime, the application of which is suspended for that small number who have volunteered to return, under an 'understanding' with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

In returning asylum-seekers against their will to Vietnam, the British and Hong Kong authorities are co-operating in a system which arbitrarily violates many fundamental human rights as a deliberate act of policy.●

Robert Chambers, London



Nick Newman

Apology Stuart Bell MP

In an article published in our May 1989 issue headed 'Speaking No Evil', written by Hilary Cashman, it was stated that Stuart Bell, MP for Middlesbrough, does not hold constituency surgeries.

In fact Mr Bell does hold surgeries regularly on Fridays at the local offices of the Transport and General Workers' Union and advertisements asking constituents to contact him for an appointment are regularly placed in the local press. We apologise to Mr Bell for the error.●

Questioning Thatcher

When I bought the October issue of *MT* the shop assistant said, 'There's no question mark, you notice'. He was referring to the cover title 'The End Of Thatcherism'.

As I expected Eric Hobsbawm's article on the matter was more subtle. Labour could win. Even our Eric doesn't really tell us why Thatcherism has plunged into such a crisis though.

Something, perhaps, to do with the unions and the working class? Not just Nalgo and the NUR either. My union, the Society of Telecom Executives, has been taking action for some months over an inadequate and imposed pay deal. When even 'natural' Thatcher voters are disgruntled enough to vote for industrial action Tory hegemony is looking very shaky indeed.●

Keith Martin, London

About Turn

In Febuary 1989 your cover proclaimed 'Labour Can't Win'. In October 1989 your cover proclaimed 'The End Of Thatcherism'. What did I miss?●

Haroon Akram-Lodhi, London

Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discusssion. Please send them to *MT* Letters, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

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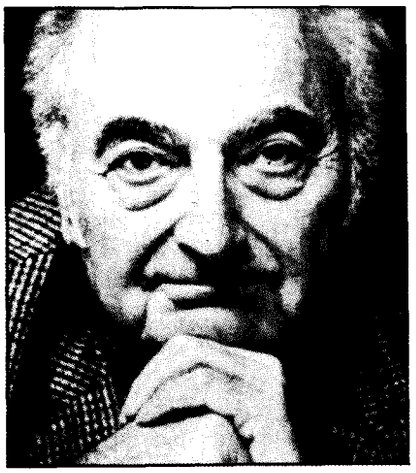
The Forty Year Itch

The GDR faces its greatest crisis since its foundation in 1949. *Chris Granlund* talks to author **Stefan Heym** and founder member of the New Forum opposition group, **Sebastian Pflugbeil**, about the GDR's future, while **Stefan Heym** gives his own analysis of the crisis



Stefan Heym was born in 1913 in Chemnitz, now Karl-Marx-Stadt, in the GDR. In 1933 he emigrated to the USA, returning to Europe with the US Army in 1944. He was later sent back to the US because of his pro-communist views and discharged from the army. In 1952 he returned to take up GDR citizenship. An internationally-acclaimed author, he is highly critical of the ruling SED. As a result, his writing is published in West Germany and only rarely in the GDR itself. His works include the novel *Collin* and *5 Days In June*, a vivid account of the workers' uprising in East Berlin in 1953. Before this interview, Heym had been listening to an eye-witness account of a recent mass demonstration in Leipzig, the largest in the history of the GDR.

Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union have unleashed forces for change throughout Eastern Europe, but the leadership of the GDR's ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) tried to continue business as usual. 'You don't redecorate your living room just because your neighbours start to do theirs', explained SED minister, Kurt Hager, in 1986. Three years later, SED leader Eric Honecker has resigned and the future of the SED looks uncertain.

Until September the SED's bunker mentality had hardly been challenged by opposition in the GDR. Only in a crisis caused by the mass exodus of its population via neighbouring Poland and Hungary where reforms are already underway, did significant opposition groups form to challenge the SED's inertia. After years of political stagnation, the GDR now finds itself at the centre of the changes that are sweeping through Eastern Europe.

The political crisis in the GDR is more complex than those in other Eastern European countries. The GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany have 40 years of separate experience and development behind them. They are two states but one nation, with one past and a shared National Socialist legacy. The sense of national cohesion in the GDR is complicated by the existence of the other Germany which also offers automatic citizenship to those who arrive from the East. The crisis in the GDR is not simply one of democracy, but one of national legitimacy.

The following interview with Stefan Heym reflects the importance of Germany's socialist traditions to many in the GDR who are critical of the SED, but who are determined to stay. His essay, an account of the GDR's history by someone who was fighting for socialism long before the GDR came into existence, gives an insight into the ways in which the crisis of legitimacy of the GDR's ruling élite is interpreted by those who hold on to the dream of a different kind of socialist future.

Sebastian Pflugbeil speaks on behalf of a different generation. In his early 40s, he grew up with the GDR. A founder member of the recently formed New Forum, he explains the outlook of the GDR's largest and most broadly-based opposition group. ●

Exciting times.
Yes. An exciting moment.

How will the Socialist Unity Party (SED) face up to these developments?
I don't know what they're going to do; that will probably be decided in the next few hours.

Given that the two German states emerged out of the cold war and that the situation has now changed, it might be argued that the conditions for the existence of the GDR no longer exist.
That is not true. As you will find in my article, I am saying that a socialist state in Germany is absolutely necessary for socialist development in the whole world.

Will that socialism be along the lines of current developments in the Soviet Union?
I don't know. I think German socialism has a different tradition and it might not have to go through all the contortions that the Russians do because we have all the functioning industry. We have excellent workers, trained workers, while in the Soviet Union they still have trouble with their workforce. People here would be able to get up tomorrow morning and take over the factories. They have marvellous managers too, you know, and technicians and engineers. The trouble is that the apparatus does not allow them to work properly.

Which of the opposition groups provides most hope for change in the GDR?
I don't think it matters which group, as you can see from the Leipzig events. I think that something is happening that Rosa Luxemburg dreamed of. The spontaneity that she was waiting for, and which never came, is happening now. The people are going on to the streets ... and in the factories something must be happening too, I am sure.

How do you think that can be articulated politically?
I don't know, the people will do that themselves. It might be that within the SED there are enough progressive forces to take over. I feel that this is the case, I know some of them, and even an absolute apparatchik like Hermann Kant[1] has jumped on the bandwagon with his statement. Only a few weeks ago he was still fighting tooth and nail against a resolution in the Writers' Union which called for reform and demanded dialogue – he voted against that. And now he himself is saying that reform must come. He is an opportunist from way back and so he knows what's coming.

So do you think, as a result of such statements and the mass demonstrations in Leipzig, that more and more members of the SED will move quickly towards reform?
If the top boys, the gerontocrats, still insist on their old ways and they call out the armed forces, then it will be very tough. But I don't think people are going to take it. They've tasted freedom ... and it tastes *damned good.*

Do you think that the changing relations between the Soviet Union and the GDR ...?
Well, of course, that is the whole reason why it could happen. You see, if Brezhnev had still been there you would still have the ice age. Gorbachev's position will be strengthened enormously if they succeed in bringing in reforms in the GDR. It would be strengthened enormously because events like those in Poland would not happen here.

This country has a socialist tradition, a democratic-socialist tradition, socialism was started here. Marx was a German, Engels was a German, Lassalle was a German. That is the tradition here, not this Catholic position that you have in Poland.

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Recent events have started speculation, particularly in the West, about reunification. The word is increasingly being used publicly again.
That is Western propaganda. If there is unification, it certainly won't happen in the way that they think – that the *Bundesrepublik* is going to swallow the German Democratic Republic – that is out. Reunification is possible only if the two big blocs are dissolved, and then it will come in an entirely new and different way that neither side can now predict.

Do you consider yourself to be a marxist or a social democrat? How would you describe yourself?
I would say you should read my books and then you will know.

You are published widely in the West because you have difficulty getting published in the GDR. You appear frequently on television but only in West German programmes that are also broadcast throughout the GDR. Given the fact that the culture of the GDR has had to develop under such conditions, would you describe it as a national culture?
There is no national culture of the GDR, there is no GDR *nation*. These are Germans in a *socialist* state, or in a 'socialist' state, a still-stalinist state. But things are changing and they will probably be citizens of a truly socialist state if things go well.

What kind of allegiance do you feel towards the country that you are living in now?
That's a big word, allegiance. You see I have been staying here all the while, even though the leadership here has been kicking me in the pants fairly regularly, so that's a kind of allegiance, isn't it?

And is there an emotional commitment there?
Oh, I'm not that kind of person. My emotions run along entirely different lines.

Why are you still there? A lot of people wonder why you have stayed.
For moments like this one. And do you think that socialism would get better in this country if I left?

No.
Well, that's why I'm staying.

Is that your role as a writer in the GDR?
It's part of my business, it's not the entire business. I'm a storyteller, but that's part of the business.

And what do you make of the narrative that's unfolding now?
It's most dramatic, on both sides. These *old boys are not evil-intentioned men*, by any means, they are tragic characters. This is a time for Shakespeare. ●

1. Hermann Kant is the chairman of the GDR Writers' Union. On Monday October 9, he published an open letter in *Junge Welt*, the Free German Youth newspaper, in which he called for dialogue between the SED and the people.

A shaft of light through a temporary gap in the Berlin Wall

Never before in the history of mankind has a state been plunged into crisis in such a ridiculous fashion as the GDR. No reformer proclaiming new theses here, no general riding into the capital city at the head of his tanks. No, this acute crisis has arisen as a result of *the population running away; instead of* barricades, a mass exodus; instead of strikes and demonstrations, the occupation of embassies; instead of clashes with the police, trips to Hungary. What remains is a party without direction, a multitude of gluttonous authorities, a mass media which stalwartly promulgates official claptrap, and at the head of all this is a government which is no longer capable of losing face for the simple reason that it no longer has face to lose.

And the enemy scoffs: 'Marx is dead', and points, quite rightly of course, to antiquation and decay within the country and to intellectual desolation, to the filth in the towns and rivers, to the scarcity of virtually everything, except schnapps, *which makes life bright and entertaining*, to the daily injustices, the nepotism and economic privilege, and to the despotism with which those who wield power dictate to the people what *they* are to do and think and where they may go and when.

Then, into the bargain, the vision on their screens evening after evening of a richer world, a world without boundaries and which is said to belong to the industrious; and, as if comrades in high places actually wished to bear witness to the image personally, their Intershops, where the superiority of western goods and eastern currency is paraded with official blessing before the poor inhabitants of the GDR, for them to see, touch, taste. No wonder that the people of the *country run off at the first available* opportunity.

In reality, however, it is not Marx who is dead, but Stalin, and it is not socialism which has fallen flat on its face, but only the particular form which is in operation here. The other, better form, in whose name so many courageous people have set down their ideas and laid down their lives, is still to come. And we are beginning to think, now that change is at hand in the countries which surround the GDR, that we should also help propagate real socialism, under which all people shape their own lives, hand in hand, in freedom and justice, and in doing so should give the GDR new meaning.

Why is it, then, that something which began so optimistically has proved so unsuccessful? It all began with the world war, the first, followed by the Revolution in Russia.

It was then that Rosa Luxemburg warned that the Revolution could only succeed in the long run if it were both socialist and democratic, and Lenin and his comrades believed that the success of their revolution depended on a second: one which would be forced to come to the

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aid of the first – the German Revolution. The German Revolution, however, petered out soon after it had erupted, and the Russian Revolution remained isolated in its backward country and turned into a dictatorship, not of the proletariat, but of the state and party apparatus: into stalinism.

In the eastern third of Germany, the second world war, which ended with the disintegration of the Reich and its occupation by the Allies, brought an order which, in terms of its structure and its relationship between those at the top and those at the bottom, was an imitation of that which had developed in the Soviet Union.

'The temptation to leave the GDR cannot be put down merely to the bigger blobs of fat in the western saucepan'

And what else could it have been? What other working model was there, from which the German comrades could have taken their bearings? And since they had, after all, not seized their power themselves, but had received it as a gift from their Soviet patrons, they were unable, even if they had wanted to, to lay claim to their own brand of socialism, a brand of their own design and moulded to suit their own country.

A history inlaid with tragedy from the outset – the explosion of June 1953 and the mass exodus of the summer of 1961 attest to that. The wall which brought the exodus to an end was an act of desperation. It had only one advantage: in future the people would no longer be able to avoid being courted by party and government. That would have been the time and opportunity for change. Enough time and opportunity to make the form of socialism which was in operation in the GDR into a form of socialism to which the people would devote themselves, instead of one from which they would flee: 28 years of time.

But the years slipped by without improvement. In the shadow of the anti-fascist protection wall it was possible to believe that socialist life in the GDR was safe and sound and really rather good. Those who led the Party and the nation closed their eyes and their ears to the views and feelings of the people in the country and clung to their bankrupt methods and slogans – until comrade Gorbachev's perestroika also began to win hearts in the eastern part of Germany and in Hungary even punched holes in the border fence, an extension of the GDR's wall, and the holes became an escape route, and elsewhere West German embassies transformed themselves into refuges for the thousands who preferred to hold out in their filth rather than to return for even a few weeks under the wing of their government.

It is important to realise that the temptation to leave the GDR cannot be put down merely to the bigger blobs of fat in the western saucepan. For the people who are turning their backs on the Republic, whether by submitting applications for exit permits or by illegal means, were raised there and grew up there, and they have been told often enough of the ideals of socialism, of solidarity and common ownership, of a just wage and fair treatment.

The church too has done its bit, and in the light of all this it would be reasonable to assume that some of that might have stuck in their minds, and that at least some of those who have left were motivated not only by the thought of gorging themselves, but also by more noble considerations.

Either way, the bloodletting will continue unless the government modifies its attitudes – or until it seals the borders completely and hermetically. No more trips abroad for anyone, no visits anywhere, nothing more. Although wholly conceivable, this drastic solution would generate opposition of an equally drastic nature, and then God help us all.

The state is suffering from mental exhaustion. It was already suffering from this by the time that the wall, a kind of corset for a disintegrating body, was built. But unfortunately no doctor ever turned up, who might have been able, with sensible methods, wisdom and tolerance, to treat the disease.

But what are we to do today, and how, in the face of catastrophe and the obvious inability of those in high places to contemplate change and reform? Cross ourselves three times and hand over the GDR, or that part of it which has not already run away, to West Germany for safe keeping? What European nation and what non-European nation wishes, after the historical experiences of the last 100 years, to see a new united Germany? And I ask, from the bottom of my heart: is the noble experiment of socialism here in the heart of Europe to be abandoned altogether simply because it has been run for so long with poor equipment and the wrong ingredients? There are, of this there is no doubt, enough people in the country who would stay in order to attempt the experiment again under new, democratic conditions. And there have long been individuals and institutions, even within and around the Socialist Unity Party (SED), who have developed models for a workable form of socialism and who are ready to put their new programme into effect jointly with all of the citizens.

A German Democratic Republic, but a better one than that which now exists, is vital, if only as a counterbalance to the Daimler-Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm-BASF-Höchst-Deutsche-Bank Republic on the opposite bank of the Elbe. What is needed is a socialist state on German soil which will grant its citizens genuine freedom and all of the rights to which free citizens are entitled. And not only for the sake of the people who live in the GDR and who would like to remain there. A sensibly-functioning form of GDR socialism is surely also essential for those outside the Republic, for all over the world the Left is suffering as a result of the complete failure of the SED state. All over the world the reactionaries are scoffing: 'Call that socialism! Take a look at it, this socialist state whose own people are fleeing in droves!'

When all that is said, it is high time for us to extricate ourselves from the old scheme of things and to transform the variety of socialism in operation here into a genuinely socialist system.

In almost every sphere of human life, whether economic and administrative, whether cultural, whether in the field of the media, education, health, transport, environment protection, or, last but not least, in the military and the police, we need to evolve new ideas, new attitudes, new methods, new values and words. Moreover, we need to create new – democratic – ways for people to relate to each other, a new rapport based on criticism and debate between those at the top and those at the bottom, every one responsible for the other, elected and capable of being voted out.

All citizens must contribute their portion to these attempts at change and must be able to rely on the fact that their views too will be heard and their suggestions taken seriously. If the years since the GDR's founding have given us anything, then it is maturity. In their internal opposition to the official line, a surprising number of people have learned how to think and act independently. All that is now necessary is for us to exhort them to participate in the process of reform.

The process of change must surely begin in the field of practical politics. It is here that the first corrections must be made, and they must be fundamental in nature; the monopoly of the one and only apparatus of power, the major feature of the stalinist system, has demonstrated its sterility. The diversity of opinion and the forthcoming important dialogue, must be given the scope to fling open the door to democratisation, openness and guaranteed rights for all which comrade Gorbachev demanded of the government of the GDR on the eve of the Republic's 40th anniversary.

Elections to the People's Chamber of the GDR would then be part of this process. Free, secret, democratic elections, not the shadow-boxing which has been the order of the day until now, with more than one candidate, chosen by the people themselves, for each seat and with several parties – which already exist in the GDR and would only need to free themselves from the chains with which they have tied themselves to the senior party, the Socialist Unity Party. And of course care must be taken that the counting of votes takes place under the supervision of the electors themselves or of people in whom they have confidence.

A government named and confirmed by a Peoples' Chamber elected in this way would possess a legitimacy which the present one does not have and would set any new chapter in the history of the GDR on a safe course: a GDR which would also one day have to build temporary accommodation in order to be able to offer a first home to those migrating to its new form of socialism.●

Stefan Heym
Translated by Terry Bond

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Not everyone is heading West

Sebastian Pflugbeil is one of the founder members of the New Forum: the largest and most broadly-based opposition group in the GDR. Formed in September, the New Forum collected over 2,000 signatures in the first two weeks of its existence. One of its central aims is the creation of the conditions for legal recognition of an opposition to the Socialist Unity Party (SED). This interview took place in his flat in East Berlin.

'I have a friend whose children have gone to the West. And that's an emotional reason for doing this. We don't want our children to run away'

What is your political background?
I come from the religious part of the spectrum of founder members. For many years I have been trying to do something about atomic weapons and atomic energy and always through the church. But many of us now have the impression that the potential to bring about changes through the church is limited. That we have achieved as much as we can within those limits. And so the next logical step was to try to develop our influence outside the church. And it's now clear that we have given many people a reason to join us. We now have contact with people from different social backgrounds, sections of the population with whom we would otherwise have had no contact. That makes things difficult but also incredibly interesting.

What do you do for a living?
I'm a physicist and work in the medical field.

Have you had problems in the time that you've been politically active?
That's difficult to work out ... every time that I've written an article or held a lecture on a particularly explosive subject, or now with the New Forum, then it leads to unpleasant discussions at work, normally about things that aren't directly connected to these political activities. The reason for these discussions is rarely directly mentioned. They try to put on indirect pressure.

The people who are now involved in New Forum come from many different backgrounds. Do you get the impression they have had little experience of political involvement until now?
Most of them have no previous experience. It's a very broad group of people who have a strong feeling that things just can't go on as they have done, and that only when the whole population decides to do something, to get involved with current developments, is there even a slight chance of beginning to resolve the problems that exist here. And that now unites Christians, Communists, workers, lawyers, nurses, doctors in a way that wasn't possible previously.

Many are still shocked about the problems at the local elections in May this year, when the results were rigged. That was proved with hard facts and figures. And then there was no reaction from the party to the wave of emigrations during August and September. So there has been a general resignation of the people in the past months and years, a feeling that there was no point in doing anything, that those in charge do whatever they want.

But now people have started coming to the conclusion that they can no longer just sit there and look on as the younger generation get up and leave. That we have to do something otherwise our own children will go as well. And so we have decided to stay here, not to go away, and we will make sure that the situation here changes so that our children will want to live here. There's a lot to be done.

Many people believe that because the GDR was born out of the cold war and that those conditions have now changed, the GDR no longer has any reasons to exist.
That's a theoretical discussion. And I think that any talk about the reunification of the two German states comes at a very bad moment and shouldn't go on. It just isn't a serious proposition that the GDR should become another *Land* of the Federal Republic, or any such similar ideas that are raised in the West. As far as I can make out such talk plays no part in people's thinking here. We have so many difficult problems that such questions aren't even considered. Nor do we want to reconstruct capitalist relations here. It's all much more complex than that.

Is the aim to work together with the SED?
What we want is open dialogue, without fear or taboo subjects. This demand for open dialogue has also now emerged within the SED – it is already so strong there that we have come very close to each other. The idea that the New Forum is on one side and the SED on the other is an impression that is no longer true. Already there are party members with us in the New Forum. In many SED groups there are people with ideas identical to ours.

We have to work with the party. But above all, we have to try to work with all those people who have only been interested in their allotments and who now want to do something. It will be difficult just to find a language that can unite all of these different people.

What is your point of identification, or your emotional commitment to the GDR?
That's a difficult question. The New Forum is strongly influenced by people who are around 40 or over, less by the very young or the very old. Many people who are around 40 have already made many attempts to change things. For decades, we have seen our friends, relatives and neighbours leaving and all the time we've asked ourselves why are they leaving? Many of us have certainly asked ourselves if maybe we shouldn't leave ourselves.

By the time you're 40, you come to a point where you have to decide what you're going to do. And many of my generation have consciously decided not to go because ... well, it might sound a bit sentimental because it looks like a refuge from the difficulties, but I have the feeling that you have got to solve problems in the place where they arise.

It's supposed to be brighter in the Federal Republic (FRG), more colourful, you can travel, but if you want to improve the world then I think that in the FRG you would also come up against granite in certain situations. We can't improve the situation in Europe if we can't even try to do something here where we live. The relationship that politically-active people have to the GDR is very difficult to describe because it is precisely those people who have had relatively serious collisions with state power. At some point in our lives, we've all had that, so it would be difficult, or an exaggeration, to say that we really love the GDR or anything like that. Such feelings are difficult to find. But we do feel that we are connected in some way with the ideals that the GDR started out with.

We would like to develop that anti-fascist, socialist tradition and we are quite certain that we're against the stalinist past and that we'd like to clear the remains of it out completely. Maybe they are the two essential points of orientation for us when we look into the past. When we look ahead, it's more difficult to say

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'We can't hope to improve the situation in Europe if we can't even do something where we live'

where we're heading. We haven't agreed that yet, we have no programme at the moment to define in a concrete way what we want to achieve. We are asking what socialism is in the GDR, or what the positive achievements of the GDR have to do with socialism, and what are the negative aspects of life in the GDR? What are the wrong routes that we can avoid?

These are all open questions to which nobody knows the answers. The word socialism is a difficult one to use because there are so many types, look at China, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, the Stalin era, the GDR, Cuba. Nobody knows for sure any more what socialism should be.

Do you have any children?

Yes, I have four children between the ages of seven and 14. That's one of the reasons why we are trying to make these changes. I have a friend whose children have gone to the West. They went this summer, it was a sudden decision, quite spontaneous, they went via Hungary. And that's an emotional reason for doing this. We don't want our children to run away, we want to stay here together.

To what extent are they aware of what's going on at the moment?

They know exactly what's going on, and of course they're afraid when a lorry full of police is waiting outside the house, when they notice that we are being followed by the state security police, or when they noticed yesterday evening that I hadn't come home. It's difficult but they understand it very well. And they understand why we do it and that it's necessary.

Do the children face problems at school as a result of all this?

Not directly. But indirectly, if things continue as they are now for example, then there's not much chance of them being able to study later on because of our activities. But we hope that the changes we're working for will remove disadvantages like that. That's something that bothers me personally a great deal, that my opinions can so directly disadvantage my children when they're older. But I think it would be wrong for parents to conform and play all the right games simply because they want their children to be able to study. The price is too high.

In the event of an election, have you discussed how you would form a list of candidates?

Very cautiously! We are all agreed that what happened at the last elections must never happen again. The electoral laws must be changed, the preparations for the next elections must involve the broad base of the population in quite concrete ways. And we must work towards presenting alternative candidates at the elections. That led to a meeting between all the groups so that we could discuss the possibility of our putting up candidates at the 1990 elections. We are also considering taking steps towards putting forward an alternative programme.

These are difficult questions and we don't have much experience of them, and we probably don't have enough time to do it all before the next elections, but we'll try. We're also suggesting that the UN should supervise the next elections. That could prevent accusations of deception like those in the May elections. Elections have been of no interest to our people for decades. But they are very important. At least that is the case when real alternatives are posed and when they are fair.

In Poland, and to a lesser extent Hungary, the opposition groups have had leading figures for a long time. Why hasn't that happened here?

We don't want to have any leaders or figureheads. That is a conscious decision. We want all citizens to remember that they can think for themselves, and we don't want the New Forum to be directed by two or three people. We find it very important and we have found that it's been very successful, even better than we'd hoped. In many places outside Berlin as well as here, people are able to get together in groups and discuss the problems we face. People come here to the flat, for example, and we've never seen them before, but they sit here and talk quite openly straight away, without fear, and that's a great experience for us and for everybody who takes part. And we hope that it's a step forward that will never be reversed. ●

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Private Waters

In Thatcherism's second term, privatisation became a buzzword. Now, with water, it is beginning to sour. **Christopher Huhne** assesses the experience of privatisation, and overleaf **Rosalind Coward** looks at why water is different

The politics of privatisation have always been symbolic. After all, the most long-standing definition of socialism is that it aims at the public ownership of the means of production. Privatisation was the policy which came to represent not merely the Thatcherite change, but the Thatcherite challenge to all the postwar orthodoxies. Not only was it a new departure, but it also contradicted the very belief in the historical inevitability of socialism. If privatisation could be made to look modern, socialism could made to look old-fashioned. It was a stab at the ideological heart of the opposition. Moreover, the modernism of the return to private ownership could also be embedded in the political consciousness by dispersing share ownership through the aspirant working and middle classes. The stakes, as ministers increasingly found, were surprisingly high.

Nevertheless, the policy was launched almost by accident. True, there had been the tit-for-tat exchange of public for private ownership between the Labour and Conservative governments of the 50s and 60s over steel. But it was a fainthearted skirmish in which neither side was for long intent on dramatically altering the outlines of the Butskellite mixed economy. The policy of privatisation is quite different. First and foremost, it has reshaped the political debate to such an extent that Labour finds a commitment fully to reverse the sales quite impossible, and indeed there are relatively few people even in the Labour movement who would want to.

Clearly, privatisation has come a long, long way from its first, oblique mention in the Conservative election manifesto of 1979. At that time, even the word had not yet been coined. There was explicit mention only of selling back 'the recently-nationalised aerospace and shipbuilding concerns ... we aim to sell shares in the National Freight Corporation to the general public'. A decade later, the policy is perceived by the government as one of its enduring successes. By the end of 1989, 18 companies will have been privatised. This is about a third of all the industries owned by the state in 1979, a group which in turn accounted for 10% of the output produced in Britain and which employed more than 2m people.

The poll evidence is ambiguous about the impact which this massive programme of change is having on opinion. At the end of April 1989, Gallup found that 14% of its sample thought that there should be more privatisation, while 41% felt that the balance was about right and 38% favoured more nationalisation. The most worrying feature of the polls for the government is that its two most imminent privatisations – water and electricity – are both far less popular than alternative candidates and, indeed, far less popular than the similar privatisations of British Telecom or British Gas in the past. According to Gallup, only a fifth of those polled in February believed that electricity should be sold off while 68% said that privatisation was a bad idea. In the case of water, the pros rated only 15% to the antis' 75%. This is half or less of the support for the privatisation of British Telecom when it was sold.

Opinion poll evidence, of course, does not tell you how much people care about the issue alongside all the others with which they are confronted. The question of ownership rarely ranks in the top few answers to the question of which are the most important issues in Britain today (and the issue that has been number one for most of Mrs Thatcher's prime minis-

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tership, unemployment, has conspicuously failed to move votes). This may be because people do not care in general about private or public ownership, but it seems just as plausible to suggest that the Conservatives have found an issue where most people disapprove only mildly but some people – notably the beneficiaries of the cheap shares – approve very strongly. In short, privatisation has become merely the most recent and most successful example of pork-barrel politics. The costs of cheap share-issues fall on the unknowing public and are widely spread, while the benefits accrue to the new shareholders and are concentrated. It is the right-wing version of the left-wing public spending programme which distributes from the many to the few.

Over the decade since 1979, the Treasury estimates that the number of shareholders has risen from 3m to 9m, or one in five of the adult population. This is a whole new political constituency of property-owners, as the Tories' election mailshots to people who bought privatised shares showed. (The economic significance of this spreading ownership is another matter: the shareholdings are so small that the proportion of shares owned by institutions like pension funds and life assurance companies has continued to rise despite the enormous increase in the number of shareholders. On one estimate, the institutions own more than three-quarters of all equities quoted on the London Stock Exchange).

Meanwhile, the remaining utilities are on the slipway. Water and electricity are already being advertised on prime-time television, a sure sign that their prices will be sufficiently attractive to ensure that Fred and Alice make a small but gratifying profit by speculating on the issues (unless a crash intervenes). The coal industry is possible, and the railways could go too. By the end of this parliament, the momentum of privatisation will have dismantled Morrison's legacy of nationalised industries brick by crumbling brick.

The trend is also catching on internationally, although an IMF study[1] argues that it is not quite as popular overseas as ministers' public relations sometimes suggests. Apart from Britain, only France has had an extensive privatisation programme although even there the proceeds are equivalent to just one year's sales in Britain. The Japanese are selling Nippon Telegraph and Telephone, and there have been privatisations in Chile, Malaysia, Niger and Turkey. However, sales in Germany and Italy have been little more than tidying-up operations.

The irony though, is that the British drive to privatise still looks more like a felicitous accident than a carefully-designed scheme to revive the economy. A major reason for the acceleration of asset sales under Nigel Lawson's chancellorship since 1983 was the happy side-effect of reducing the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement – the budget deficit caused by spending more than revenue.

'Privatisation is the right-wing version of the left-wing public-spending programme which distributes from the many to the few'

This released the Treasury from an uncomfortable hook by allowing a more expansionary budgetary policy than would otherwise have occurred. By curious accounting convention, asset sales count as negative public spending. In other words, the more you sell, the more you reduce public spending (and therefore borrowing). At a time when the government and the markets were making a fetish of borrowing limits, asset sales allowed higher public spending or lower taxes than would otherwise have been the case. They were one way the Treasury could wriggle out of its highly-restrictive borrowing limits at a time of record unemployment.

The criticism that the government was 'selling the family silver', in Harold Macmillan's splendidly emotive phrase, was always wide of the mark. Indeed, it is very hard to see in economic theory why there should be any difference to the government if it finances its deficit by getting cash in exchange for issuing bonds – promises to pay interest in the future – or if it finances its deficit by selling assets – which are entitlements to a stream of income in the future. If the capital markets are working efficiently, it should be impossible to tell which is the better course of action to take. This is a closely-related result to the famous theorem of Franco Modigliani, for which he won the Nobel prize for economics. He pointed out that the market value of a firm does not depend on the particular mix of equity (shares) or debt (say, bank finance) in its funds. If firms found that it was cheaper to raise money through borrowing than through the issue of shares, the relative cost would begin to change until it became equal. The government's net worth – its assets minus its debt – is also the same whether it finances a deficit by borrowing or by selling assets.

The real economic arguments about privatisation should revolve around whether the companies work better in the private or in the public sector. The public claims about the relative economic efficiency of privately-owned companies, or the benefits of rolling back the frontiers of the state, are not as clear cut as ministers like to argue. The more the theorists write about the subject, the clearer it becomes that the simple idea that many of the former nationalised industries could operate independently of government scrutiny is so much eyewash. The real choice is between actually owning the businesses, and regulating them tightly. The government is simply not going to be able to wash its hands of most of the privatised industries.

The key determinant of whether the government can take its hands off the tiller is whether the companies are operating in a competitive market. If they are, then it can safely let the management get on with it. Companies like Jaguar or Amersham International must perform, or they will lose market share, sales and profits. If they do not perform, there are plenty of companies big enough to make a takeover bid. Even the threat of takeover may encourage the management. Like most ordinary joint stock companies, they face competitive pressure in the markets for their products, for their inputs and for their capital.

With this type of company, theory suggests that the switch from public to private ownership makes more sense. Any conflict between social and private objectives is likely to be smaller in competitive markets than in monopoly ones. A competitive market means that the prices of goods and services will be fairly set to reflect demand and supply, which ensures that resources are efficiently allocated. Private ownership may in turn encourage another type of efficiency: internal or X-efficiency, which is the more efficient production of a given good or service for fewer inputs of labour, land and capital[2]. The private owner, or his or her manager, has more incentive to save costs than a public sector manager who will receive no extra reward if he or she does.

Nevertheless, the evidence that privately-owned companies perform better in competitive markets than publicly-owned ones is not conclusive. Vickers and Yarrow[3] quote a study of the performance of the privately-owned Canadian Pacific against the competing, publicly-owned Canadian National railway. It concludes: 'Public ownership is not inherently less efficient than private ownership' and that the 'oft-noted inefficiency of government enterprises stems from the isolation of effective competition rather than public ownership *per se*'. Other work in North American markets where public and private enterprise compete differs depending on the sector. Overall, Vickers and Yarrow conclude that private ownership is probably more efficient, when operating in a competitive market, simply because more of it survives.

If the company is operating in a market over which it has substantial control because of lack of competition, then the arguments about ownership and efficiency are quite different. Internal efficiency – reducing costs to produce a given bundle of output – may be increased if ownership changes, but only if private owners establish better monitoring of performance. However, if the monopoly company is able merely to raise prices to its customers, it is quite possible that it will not even bother to make extensive gains in internal efficiency. After all, it has less incentive to do so. Indeed, establishing high pay in an industry is one way of preventing new competitors from entering the market. There are certainly plenty of examples of private-sector monopolies which have not traditionally benefited from internal efficiency, including Mrs Thatcher's current *bête noire*, the independent television companies.

The sensible response of policy is to introduce as much competition as possible into the market, either by splitting up public corporations or encouraging new competitors. Yet the government, until its recent proposals on electricity, has been

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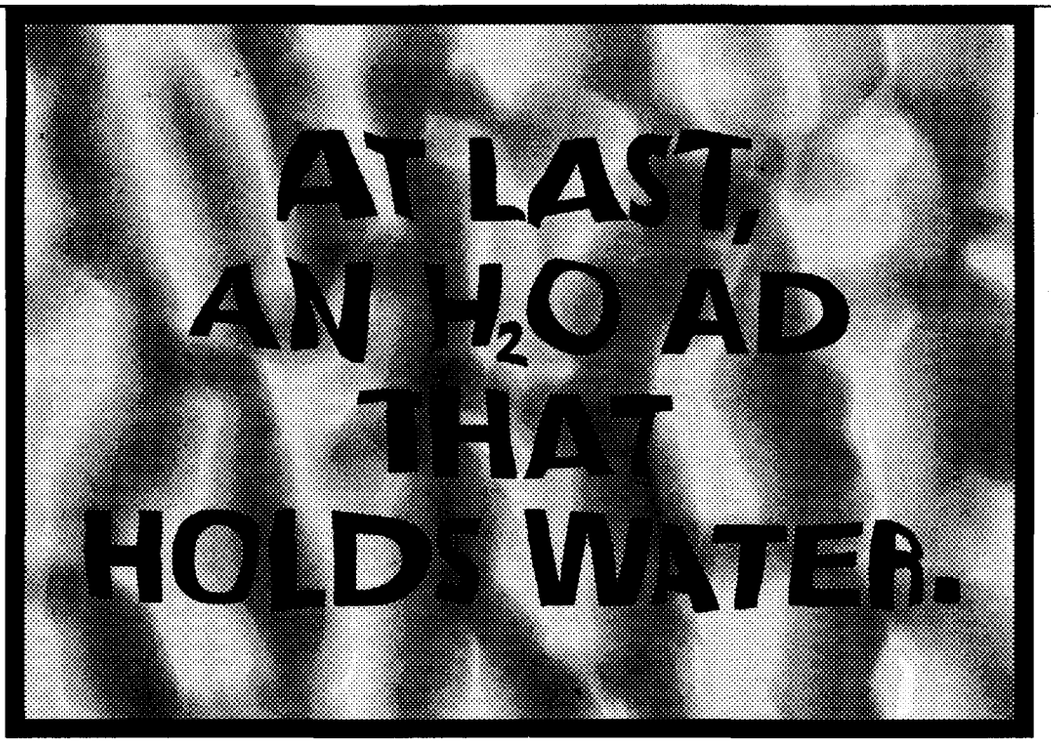

Unfortunately, your water isn't as clean as some people would like you to believe. Despite promises from the Government, Britain has failed to comply with EEC standards on drinking water. Which means that millions of people are still exposed to illegal levels of pesticides, aluminium, nitrate or lead. Friends of the Earth is the one independent watchdog which is actively fighting for cleaner drinking water. To continue that work, we need your help. So why not make a real investment in clean water and support our Water Campaign.

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In Deep Water

The privatisation programme had seemed just part of the Thatcherite steamroller. It drew no serious fire and even attracted some unlikely investors. But water privatisation is currently following an entirely different course. Is it possible that the government is actually coming unstuck with water? Even the Labour Party managed some relevant mud-slinging concerning the expenditure of money on advertising. But, more importantly, public opinion was already far from on the government's side.

'How can they privatise what we already own?' is the popular refrain on radio phone-ins, a protest which curiously had no resonances for other nationalised industries. But the crux of the matter is that water isn't seen as industrial, in spite of sustained attempts by the advertisers to make it so. Unlike gas or telephones or steel, water is seen as an element, a natural resource. And this is the crucial factor in determining public opinion because the natural is an arena which is currently highly contested, both symbolically and politically.

Probably the most significant factor in redefining the natural is the new ecological consciousness. In this there is a powerful fantasy of the Earth or the planet as an original state, a state where everything was in harmony in an ecological balance, before the greed and destructiveness of humanity began to pollute it. The purity of water is a peculiarly-powerful symbol in this discourse: it is a fundamental natural resource, available for the benefit of the planet were it not for humankind's interventions. Attached to this new perception of the planet is a discourse of custodianship, a sense of collective moral responsibility to the planet and its species.

But the problem is that the idea of a moral custody and guardianship on behalf of a future generation is completely at odds with the language of acquisition and exploitation which has accompanied these flotations. The attempt to represent water as an industry, involving millions of pounds of expenditure and representing the possibility of gain, tangles with public fears about the exploitation of nature. The privatisation campaign has tried to place water on the side of science. Something which is emphasised by the H_2Ownership campaign, which reminds the public of the scientific definition of water and therefore links water to an industrial process of transformation. But this runs slap bang into the public perception of science and industry as the cause of the current problems with the water supply.

The public is currently in no mood to be awed by the massive industrial transformation of nature. On the contrary they are in flight from such things. Thus, when the privatisation campaign produces the image of a self-satisfied toy duck smoking a cigar, recommending H_2Ownership, it is inserted into a context where the public have already identified materialistic self-interest as the cause of the destruction of nature.

The fact is that water isn't any more natural than steel or gas. Nor does it involve any less industrial transformation. What's more, the early campaigns for water privatisation may well have been useful in reminding the public about just how much water we use and how many processes tap into our supply. The problem was they also reminded us about how much we deposit into the supply, unwittingly evoking the discussions already in play among the environmentalists. The glorification of sewage and the use of water to wash industrial processes could not have been more out of touch with a population whose preoccupation with their bowels had now extended into the bowels of the earth.

If water privatisation fails to find proper public support, it may well ultimately be because of higher interest rates. But the fact that economics might ultimately prevail cannot disguise the fact that, for the first time in 10 years, there are ideological currents stronger than Thatcher's at play. ●

Rosalind Coward

very slow to recognise the case for competition as opposed to a change in ownership. British Gas was left intact, and BT has had to contend only with Mercury. A much more sensible solution might have been to split the industry up, as the Americans did with AT&T. If competition is not introduced, or if it cannot be introduced because the industry is effectively a natural monopoly like the water businesses, then the government choice is between public ownership and regulated private ownership. That is where we are with the existing privatisations, and where we will be later with water.

The impact on the economy will take time to assess, but it is not going to be easy to do so. Productivity changes may be one proxy for internal efficiency. The evidence so far is that different rates of productivity growth in the public-sector companies bear little relationship to whether the company is on the slipway to privatisation. Matthew Bishop and John Kay conclude that 'gains in British Coal and British Steel (where privatisation has not been in prospect until recently) and the electricity supply industry have matched those in British Gas and the poorest performance since 1983 comes from the flagship of privatisation, British Telecom'[4]. However, a conclusive study would have to compare similar industries in the public and private sector.

'Apart from Britain, only France has had an extensive privatisation programme'

Another measure is profitability. There has been a large difference between the profits as a percentage of the replacement cost of capital – the rate of return – between the public and private sectors. In 1985, for example, industrial and commercial companies earned 21.3% against 2.6% for public corporations. But the closing of the profits gap with private business is not necessarily a good indicator of increased efficiency, since it may come about due to more vigorous exploitation of monopoly power to levy high prices. There are, as a Lloyds Bank report[5] makes clear, plenty of loopholes in British Telecom's regulation and pricing rules.

Nor will it be enough to see whether the prices charged to consumers have risen more slowly than before. One danger of a regulated regime is that the company 'captures' the regulators so that they become ineffective; however, there is also the opposite danger that excessively-strict regulation of output prices – or the fear of excessively-strict future regulation – leads to under-investment in plant and equipment. This, indeed, was one of the original reasons proposed for utility nationalisation: the rate of return required by the private owners in assessing investment possibilities was perceived to be higher than the social one. (This argument is used by the Labour Party to justify the renationalisation of British Telecom, which will not lay two-way information technology cables to every household). Willy-nilly, the government or its agencies are going to have to be involved in the decisions of those privatised companies which continue to enjoy a monopoly.

There is, though, not much doubt that Britain's public corporations performed poorly through the 70s. The profits gap was too large to be explained by the nationalised industries' pursuit of social objectives (for example, British Rail subsidising commuter services to avoid city congestion). Productivity growth was also low, and the rate of return on capital abysmal. A sharp change in regime was certainly called for, and even the preparation for private ownership seems to have produced substantial results. It may be that big and bureaucratic corporations, like economies in some Schumpeterian or Mancur Olson view of the world, benefit from occasionally being shaken by the scruff of the neck. Fifty years on, renationalisation may be needed to put them all on their toes.

Indeed, it is a further irony, given the political mileage which the government seeks to make from privatisation, that many of the original nationalisations were pushed through not by an ideologically-motivated socialist government but by the Tory government and Tory municipalities in the 30s. A recurrent problem in electricity supply, for example, was that the regulation which the authorities rightly thought was necessary to stop an abuse of a local monopoly in turn led to under-investment in generating assets. There may simply be a certain range of industries, largely effective natural monopolies, which need the discipline of being periodically shuttle-cocked between the public and the private sector. ●

1. Richard Hemming and Ali M Mansoor *Privatisation And Public Enterprises*, International Monetary Fund, Washington DC, 1988.
2. The concept of X-inefficiency was coined by Harvey Leibenstein, professor of economics at Harvard. See, for example, Leibenstein *Beyond Economic Man*, Harvard, 1976 and *Inside The Firm: the inefficiencies of hierarchy*, Harvard, 1987.
3. John Vickers and George Yarrow *Privatisation: An Economic Analysis*, MIT Press, Cambridge USA and London, 1988 quoting DW Caves and LR Christensen 'The relative efficiency of public and private firms in a competitive environment: the case of Canadian railroads', 1980, in the *Journal Of Political Economy* 88: 958-976 4. Matthew Bishop and John Kay *Does Privatisation Work? Lessons from the UK*, Centre for Business Strategy, London Business School, 1988.
5. *Lloyds Bank Annual Review* 'Privatisation And Ownership', ed Christopher Johnson, 1988.

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Fukuyama commences his argument with a defence of Hegel against Marx. He suggests that ideas and ideologies rather than material circumstances are the ultimate arbiter of history. In particular he cites Alexandre Kojève, a French intellectual who followed Hegel and who became influential in the 1930s, in support of the idea that history ended in 1806 with the Battle of Jena, Napoleon's defeat of the Prussian monarchy, and the triumph of the principles of the French Revolution. From that moment, Fukuyama argues, following Hegel and Kojève, history was simply a matter of extending the principles of the French Revolution.

To quote Fukuyama: 'For Kojève, as for all good Hegelians, understanding the underlying processes of history requires understanding developments in the realm of consciousness or ideas, since consciousness will ultimately remake the real world in its own image. To say that history ended in 1806 meant that mankind's ideological evolution ended in the ideals of the French or American Revolutions: while particular regimes in the real world might not implement these ideals fully, their theoretical truth is absolute and could not be improved upon.'

Fukuyama sees major challenges to liberalism (by which he means liberal capitalism, namely a combination of the free market and political democracy) in terms of fundamental ideologies, given this insistence on the primary role of social consciousness. He argues that there have only been two such fundamental challenges, fascism and communism. He argues that fascism has clearly failed, and that communism, its most formidable adversary, is now also seen to have failed.

He suggests that with 'the receding of the class issue', support for communism in the Western world has declined. Meanwhile, in Asia, there has been a phenomenal expansion in the appeal of 'liberalism', with the postwar success of Japan, about which Fukuyama expresses a certain reservation, and more recently with the rapid growth of the newly-industrialising countries in Asia like South Korea.

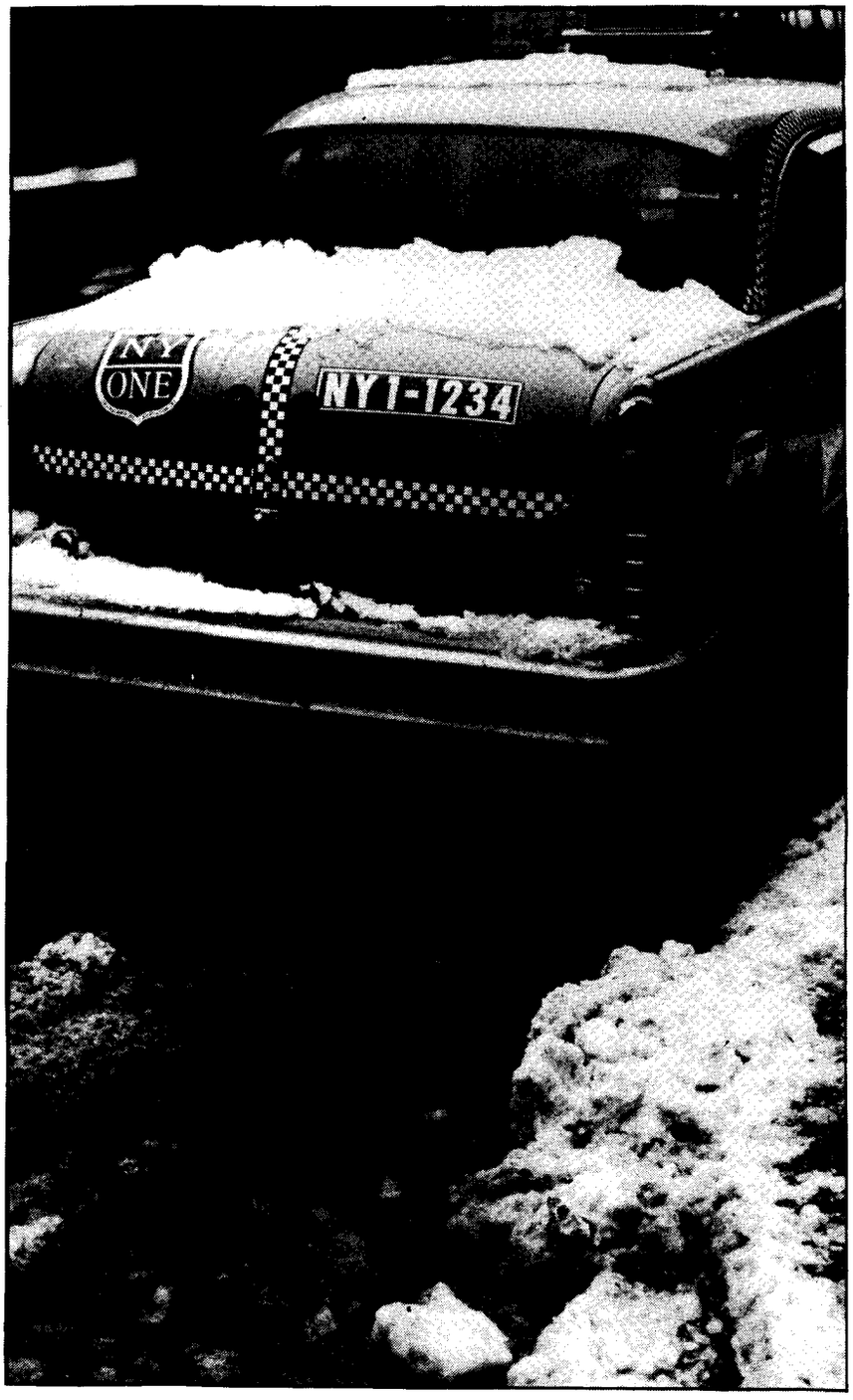
Fukuyama sees the economic reforms in China as the spread of liberalism there too, albeit in an early and ill-developed form. But he argues that, 'It is developments in the Soviet Union ... that have put the final nail in the coffin of the marxist-leninist alternative to liberal democracy'. He goes on: 'What has happened in the four years since Gorbachev's coming to power is a revolutionary assault on the most fundamental institutions and principles of stalinism, and their replacement by other principles which do not amount to liberalism per se but whose only connecting thread is liberalism.'

Thus he sees the economic reforms as remorselessly leading in a market direction. 'If the bulk of the present economic reform proposals were put into effect, it is hard to know how the Soviet economy would be more socialist than those of other Western countries with large public sectors.' Likewise he sees the political reforms as an attack not only on stalinism but leninism, leading ultimately to some form of political democracy.

With the death of fascism and communism, Fukuyama sees no fundamental ideological competitors left for liberal capitalism, dismissing the claims of nationalism and religion in this context. We are witnessing the 'unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism', 1806 has finally come of age, it is 'the end of history'.

He goes on: 'The end of history will be a very sad time. The struggle for recognition, the willingness to risk one's life for a purely abstract goal, the worldwide ideological struggle that called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands.' He concludes: 'Perhaps this very prospect of centuries of boredom at the end of history will serve to get history started once again.'

Francis Fukuyama is deputy director of the US State Department's policy planning staff. His 10,000-word article appeared in the summer issue of the right-wing journal *The National Interest*. ●



The End Of History?

This summer an article by Francis Fukuyama became all the rage in Washington. In it he argued that liberal capitalism had triumphed, that history had finally come to an end. We summarise Fukuyama's argument, together with responses from **Jonathan Steele, Edward Mortimer** and **Gareth Stedman Jones**

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Jonathan Steele

A year ago the flavour of the month for the American media èlite was purple pessimism. Americans lapped up the message that their power and prestige were going downhill, according to Paul Kennedy's *The Rise And Fall Of The Great Powers*. Now tastes have switched and rosy triumphalism is the big seller. Francis Fukuyama's essay serves it up in massive dollops. You cannot deny that he does it well. His argument is engaging and provocative.

Yet what he reveals is not so much the end of history as the continuation of that special brand of Americo-centricity which still bedevils much of the intellectual life of the United States, whether of the left or the right. Fukuyama writes in classic American missionary vein, trampling on history, mistaking surface phenomena for deep ones, and pulling together under a single label issues which have nothing in common.

The poverty of the Third World is briefly acknowledged but there is no understanding that the issue is impoverishment, rather than poverty. Standards of living have been declining in most of Africa and Latin America over the last decade mainly because of the Western-imposed debt burden and downturns in the terms of trade. But then Fukuyama is convinced that black poverty in the United States is not systematically-caused, but a matter of culture. The ecological crisis, and the conflicts which it may cause, are ignored. The word 'nuclear' does not appear once, even though, in spite of the present detente between Washington and Moscow, the bomb is still more likely to produce the end of history than anything contained in Fukuyama's analysis.

Steele: 'What we are witnessing in the Soviet Union is not the end of history but the end of the historic split which 1914 caused on the European Left'

But the central weakness of his argument does not lie in these omissions. It centres on his failure to locate his concept of liberal democracy on any clear spectrum of ideas. At one minute it is defined ridiculously widely. We are told, for example, that Beethoven being piped into Japanese department stores is proof of the victory of Western liberal democracy. So is the appearance of Sony television sets in Iran. At the next, it is confined to the kind of political system currently operating in the United States.

The reality is that the liberal enlightenment which reached its first political climax in the French Revolution branched out into a set of ideas and political practices of which marxism is an integral part. Fukuyama attempts to juxtapose marxism to liberalism as though they are intellectual opposites. I do not agree with many of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's political ideas, but I share his view that marxism belongs to the Western secular liberal tradition. If Fukuyama were not such an Americo-centrist and knew something of the history of European social-democracy he would understand this, since it stands between the unabashed free-market liberalism which he advocates and the marxist-leninist ideology which he hates.

His strongest, though far from original, point is that marxist-leninist ideology in the Soviet Union is virtually dead, and that Gorbachev's reforms are the first in 70 years of history that have begun to accept this. This clearly is a momentous time in history, and Fukuyama is right to stress it. But it is important not to exaggerate it. Firstly, marxist-leninist ideology as the primary driving force of Soviet foreign policy did not collapse with Gorbachev. It collapsed within months of October 1917 when Bukharin's plea to spread the revolution was defeated and the Bolsheviks signed the humiliating treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Stalin's non-aggression pact with Hitler, 50 years old this year, was also hardly a revolutionary move. Of course Soviet foreign policy over the years has supported foreign movements which call themselves socialist or even marxist-leninist, but Moscow's motivation was that these movements were seen as anti-Western. Their ideology was not what attracted Moscow to them.

The monumental change which Gorbachev has made to Soviet foreign policy is to end its anti-Western thrust. This has nothing to do with the collapse of communism or the triumph of liberalism. It is a piece of nation-state pragmatism, based on the view that only by ending the West's enemy image of the USSR can Moscow make the defence cuts and acquire the technology which it wants. On domestic policy Gorbachev's changes are more dramatic. Here, it is true, he is abandoning most of the ideological and political baggage of the last 60 years of stalinism and neo-stalinism.

It is also true that his stated purpose of returning to so-called true leninism is partly a fraud. He is actually opening the door to a set of economic ideas and market techniques which are indeed borrowed from the West, and have very little to do with Lenin. Some of them are Friedmanite or Thatcherite. Others have their origins in social-democracy.

Which of them will prove workable in Soviet conditions, or whether they will prove workable at all is the question which those of us who live in Moscow ask ourselves every day. It provides the main fascination of being here. Fukuyama argues that the conservative opposition in the USSR consists of 'simple workers', who want 'tradition, order and authority'. Even without the undemocratic illiberalism of his phrase, I suspect he is wrong. What most Soviet workers appear to want, to judge from this summer's miners' strikes and the public support they had, is food and social justice. The former is non-ideological. The second is a natural human reaction against an élite which has run the country undemocratically for two generations. But it is also in part a reaction conditioned by years of education in socialist ideology.

In spite of everything which perestroika has done, this legacy still makes the Soviet Union a very different place from the United States. The American cult of the individual separates its way of life not only from that of the Soviet Union but also from Western Europe, where collectivist notions are stronger and government rather than contract law is seen as the primary arbiter of social conflicts. What we are witnessing in the Soviet Union, I believe, is not the end of history but the end of the historic split which 1914 caused on the European Left. After three-quarters of a century Moscow's anathematisation of social-democracy is almost over.●

Edward Mortimer

Short of assassinating the president, there can be no quicker way for a Washington intellectual to become famous than to publish a long article in a leading political magazine arguing some instantly memorable and ostensibly absurd proposition. That is especially true if the intellectual in question holds, or is about to hold, a position in the federal government, since this invests his/her eccentric views with deep political significance. In the Reagan administration several key officials were believed to owe their appointments to such articles, with the result that the latter became set texts for anyone seeking to understand the specific aspects of policy with which they were concerned.

The Bush administration appears, at first sight, less susceptible to this type of analysis, being relatively short on ideologues and long on seasoned practioners. But Francis Fukuyama, the deputy director of the State Department's policy planning staff, has almost singlehandedly made up that deficiency. His now-famous article, 'The End of History?', carries the mandatory disclaimer that the opinions expressed in it 'do not reflect those...of any agency of the US government', but that has not stopped various commentators from trying to read it as a guide to the new administration's world outlook.

One should not jump to conclusions about the influence on policy that the deputy director of the State Department's policy planning staff can in practice exert. But at least it seems reasonable to infer that he accepted that job with the intention of recommending a 'radical policy redirection', away from global confrontation with the Soviet Union and towards a policy which takes

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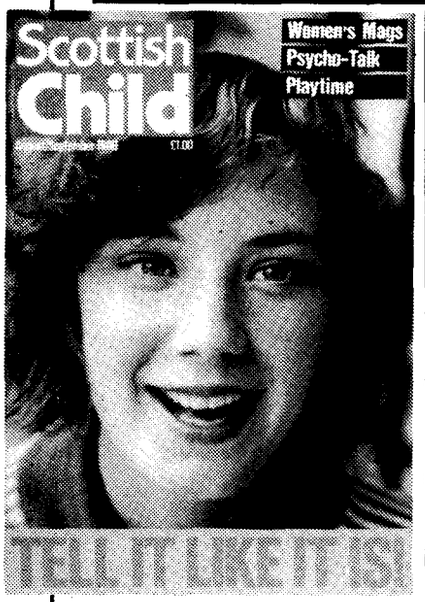

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account of 'the growing "common marketisation" of international relations, and the diminution of the likelihood of large-scale conflict between states.' For that is what he explicitly predicts as the consequence of the death of marxism-leninism 'as a living ideology of world historical significance'.

However, to search Fukuyama's text for clues to current or future US policy is probably to take him both more and less seriously than he expects. Whether he circulated drafts of the article among Washington 'movers and shakers' while the administration was being formed I do not know; but it does not read as if written primarily for that purpose. Certainly the title and the argument were intended to catch the eye, but rather to provoke controversy and gain notoriety than to win the confidence of cautious, clubbable pragmatists like George Bush and James Baker. Indeed it parades its intellectualism and condescends to contemporary American culture in a way which would hardly recommend itself to such people (not least because it might well remind them of Henry Kissinger at his most patronising). At times Fukuyama seems even to have his tongue in his cheek, or not far out of it – especially in the famous last paragraph where he warns us to expect 'centuries of boredom' now that history has come to an end.

Mortimer: 'There can be no quicker way for a Washington intellectual to become famous than to publish some instantly memorable and ostensibly absurd proposition'

One may guess, therefore, that Fukuyama is enjoying a good deal of the obloquy he has attracted. On the other hand, he must be irritated by the various summaries and abridgements of his text that are doing the rounds, most of which make it sound less sophisticated than it in fact is. The full text turns out to anticipate many of the objections that have been raised: the claims of religion and nationalism, for instance, as ideological competitors with liberalism; and the possibility that Japan might constitute an alternative model.

Fukuyama even takes out some sort of insurance against the historical nemesis which his historicist hubris invites, by conceding that 'it is impossible to rule out the sudden appearance of new ideologies or previously unrecognised contradictions in liberal societies'.

What, then, is Fukuyama actually saying? He starts with an interpretation of Hegel, attributed to Alexandre Kojève, which I am not competent to refute but which I think must involve some rather drastic telescoping, since the uninformed reader would be left with the clear impression that Hegel was an apostle of liberalism and a fervent admirer of the French Revolution. For the purposes of this argument, however, what matters is not what Hegel, or indeed Kojève actually thought, but what Fukuyama derives from them, namely:
(a) idealism, in the philosophical sense: events in the realm of consciousness determine those in the material world, rather than the other way round;
(b) 'history' is driven by contradictions between 'large, unifying world views';
(c) 'mankind's ideological evolution ended in the ideals of the French or American Revolutions' aka 'liberalism', whose 'theoretical truth is absolute and could not be improved upon';
(d) in the past century liberalism has successfully seen off two major challenges, from fascism and communism;
(e)there is a lot of tidying-up still to be done in the material world, but no further serious ideological challenges are in sight; thus the present century which 'began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy' – or so Fukuyama thinks – 'seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: ...an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism';
(f) 'history' is therefore coming to an end, rather as in *1066 And All That*, but not because America has become top nation. The very concept of top nation is part of history, and the prototype of the post-historical 'universal homogeneous state' is not America but the European Community, whose members 'are much further gone than we are down the road that denies the legitimacy of the use of force in international politics, even in self-defence'. Kojève himself, it seems, acknowledged this by spending his last years as a Eurocrat, having concluded that philosophers, like generals and statesmen, were now redundant.

Fukuyama's theory is thus a two-pronged attack on marxism. He starts by asserting the superiority of idealism over materialism as a way of explaining history, and proceeds to assert the failure of marxism in the global battle of ideas. It is perhaps not for me, as a mere journalist whose rudimentary knowledge of philosophy derives from English empiricism, to intervene in this quarrel between historicists.

For what it is worth, I think Fukuyama's criticism of some of the cruder versions of materialism is well taken, while suspecting that Marx's own version would be found, on careful rereading, to be rather less crude than he makes out. But equally I find the pure idealist version of history, which Fukuyama apparently favours, inadequate. Granted that human behaviour is immediately determined by states of consciousness rather than material conditions, one still needs to explain *why* people are motivated by a given idea at one place and time and not at another. Here, surely, material conditions do have a part to play.

Then we come to the definition of 'history' as essentially a battle of 'ideas in the sense of large unifying world views', a 'dialectical process with a beginning, a middle and an end'; and the assertion that 'large-scale conflict must involve large states still caught in the grip of history' in this sense. What does this mean? Not, clearly, that all large-scale conflict in the past has been between states adhering to different 'large unifying worldviews': many great wars have been fought between states adhering to essentially the same world view – be it religious, dynastic, nationalist, or a combination of all three. No, what Fukuyama is saying is that those ideologies contained contradictions which brought their adherents into collision with each other, whereas 'liberalism' or 'Western liberal democracy' has resolved all contradictions, so that its 'universalisation ... as the final form of human government' is inevitable and will mark 'the end point of mankind's ideological evolution'.

One of the things that makes this statement seem odd is that, historically, liberalism did not succeed nationalism or emerge as a resolution of nationalism's inherent contradictions. On the contrary, nationalism emerged as a contradiction within liberalism and a reaction against it. But not an irreconcilable contradiction according to Fukuyama. He sees national conflicts as arising not from liberalism itself as 'from the fact that the liberalism in question is incomplete', among 'peoples who are forced to live in unrepresentative political systems that they have not chosen'.

Nationalism, in other words, is a kind of growing pain of liberal democracy, which in its mature form, *viz* the European Community, it can overcome. That sounds a rather glib treatment of the millions who have perished in international conflicts in the last two centuries. Yet it is true that there is so far no clear example of a major war pitting one liberal democracy against another. The idea that Hegel's 'World Spirit' could find itself finally realised and materialised in the Common Market is somehow counter-intuitive, but has yet to be empirically disproved.

It is not difficult to score points of detail against Fukuyama, especially as his essay reads more like the product of a sudden flash of inspiration than of careful, systematic thought. (No doubt he will refine it and amplify it into a book, as soon as the State Department gives him time: publishers must already be weighing in with offers of a six-figure advance.) But his main point – the current lack of competitors against political and economic liberalism in the world ideological market-place – is surely hard to refute. What seems much more dubious is the assertion that all the contradictions within this model have been resolved. According to Fukuyama, the state whose universalisation was already 'imminent' in 1806 incorporates the principles of liberty *and equality*. Yet nearly 200 years later the benefits of liberalism are, on a global level, most unequally distributed; and there is a real danger that unfettered economic activity will soon render the planet uninhabitable, bringing human history to an end in a rather more literal sense than Fukuyama intends. Arguments for coercion based on the need to avert this catastrophe may well pose a real challenge to liberalism in the near future, but that is one chal-

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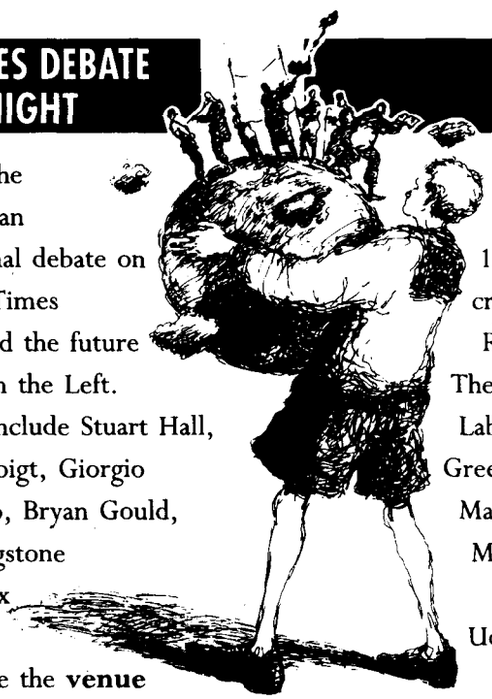

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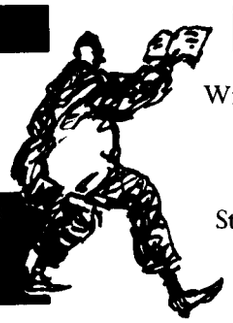

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Michael O'Shaughnessy

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lenge he fails to consider.

One must share his hope that large-scale wars between large states are a thing of the past – though if true this may have as much to do with the fear of mutual annihilation as with the resolution of ideological contradictions. But one surely should protest against the implied definition of 'history' as merely the record of such conflicts, and against his concluding assertion that in their absence we must expect 'a very sad time' with 'neither art nor philosophy' and no scope for self-sacrifice, courage, imagination or 'idealism' (used this time in a non-technical sense).

There is plenty of work to do yet, Mr Fukuyama. But perhaps, in that last paragraph, you do have your tongue in your cheek. ●

Gareth Stedman Jones

What is curious about Francis Fukuyama's picture of 'the end of history' is that a position currently being attributed by journalists to 'the Right' should have derived from a reading of Hegel which is generally regarded as radical and proto-marxian. Fukuyama's understanding of Hegel is based upon a famous interpretation of his *Phenomenology Of The Spirit* put forward in France in the 1930s by Alexandre Kojève. For Kojève, the central moment in Hegel's thought was the dialectic between master and slave. This occurs in the section depicting the emergence of 'self-consciousness', the moment of the foundation of the possibility of human society and history, of the beginnings of the separation of humanity from nature. 'A self-consciousness confronts another self-consciousness', writes Hegel. Having first acquired 'consciousness' by distinguishing its instinct from nature, the ego requires recognition of its selfhood by another ego like itself. A life-and-death struggle for reciprocal recognition ensues, resulting in the final subjection of the one to the other. One becomes master, the other slave. The master has risked his life for non-natural reasons – a thing no animal would do. He has thus established his humanity, and by risking death, his freedom from nature.

Stedman Jones: 'The present global triumph of liberal capitalism says more about the exhaustion of the historical alternatives than the intrinsic strength of liberal capitalism itself'

But the result is not satisfactory. For he has received recognition from a being whom he does not regard as equal to himself. Furthermore, his victory engenders no development. He is henceforth a pure consumer repetitively enjoying what the slave provides. Despite his failure to establish his humanity, development and history come to be embodied in the slave. For, in his fear and subjection, the slave is forced to work and, through his labour, develops skill, memory and the power of thought.

In Kojève's account, the master-slave dialectic is a socio-historical phenomenon which bestrides history, in effect the founding moment of class struggle and the development of the forces of production. After his victory, the master has no part to play; he is paradigmatic of a parasitic ruling class. The future belongs to the slave. He is liberated from his abject condition by the spiritualised quality of his labour. He progressively releases history from nature and strives with increasing success for the recognition that the master had originally denied him. His final success, the establishment of a community in which all accord recognition to all, was established, according to Kojève, by the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon, 'the World Spirit on horseback'. Thus history came to an end with the battle of Jena in 1806.

It is not difficult to see why Kojève's lectures made such an impact upon French left-wing thinkers as diverse as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Bataille and Lacan. Indeed, Kojève's quasi-history of master and slave formed much of the basis of French existential marxist thinking between the 1940s and 1960s. But neither is it difficult to see how, with a slight twist, it could be made to serve the purposes of American liberalism in the 1980s. For Kojève's left disciples it was not difficult to regard Hegel's master-slave dialectic as a prefiguration of the class struggle between bourgeois and proletarian. History was not yet over because the requisite recognition had not been achieved. But the goal of history had been stated and in this sense Marx was no more than a specification of Hegel's project. For Fukuyama, on the other hand, the goal of history established by this dialectic was not communism but liberal democracy, and the subsequent defeat of fascism and communism in the 20th century have finally brought about its realisation.

The problem about both these versions, insofar as they appeal to the authority of Hegel, is that Kojève's marxian reading produced a serious distortion of Hegel's theory.

Hegel's *Phenomenology* was not designed to be thought of as history. It drew upon history for its examples, but it might more accurately be described as a form of developmental psychology. It was an attempt to account for the origins and development of reason and to show that self-understanding had been acquired through a process of struggle within the self, between the self and the world and between the self and other selves. This is important because it meant that the master-slave dialectic was as much a struggle within the self (between reason and the passions for instance) as it was one enacted upon a social terrain. The *Phenomenology* was the story of Spirit's quest to achieve peace in the knowledge that there was nothing outside itself. Hence the baffling switches to and fro between man's social and psychic existence. And this is where Kojève radically distorted Hegel in a manner agreeable to marxists and liberals alike. He simply suppressed the psychological and religious dimensions of the picture and replaced it with a proto-marxian account of class struggle.

In the *Phenomenology* the master-slave dialectic is situated at a primitive foundational moment of history. It does not bestride history. Indeed it quite quickly finds a form of resolution in stoicism, a philosophy in which thought is free and can be shared by emperor and slave alike. But it soon reappears in an entirely psychic form as the 'unhappy consciousness', Hegel's picture of religious alienation. Man as thought is free, but now at odds with his finite natural existence. He now projects this lost unity into a transcendent God to whom he subjects himself as a slave. Since the master is psychic figure as much as social phenomenon, he cannot be treated as superfluous. He represents the risk of life and hence freedom and right – and on a historical terrain, war and nationhood. He is thus no less necessary to human development than the slave and his work. The true resolution is for man to see himself as the vehicle of Spirit (God), to reconcile the infinite and finite within himself and to understand the divine as immanent in the human community. This was the principle enunciated by Christ, but only slowly understood. The Reformation and the French Revolution represented two giant steps by which man achieved this reconciliation with the divine through his participation in a political community in which reason and freedom at last found embodiment in the secular world.

If this is the trajectory of the *Phenomenology*, it can be seen that it bears only a faint resemblance to the portrait of 'the end of history' painted by Kojève and Fukuyama. Hegel, it is true, accepted the existence of commercial society as the basis of higher social solidarities. But he was neither a liberal in the Anglo-American meaning of the term. Nor was he a democrat. In political terms, his ambition was to reconcile modern commercial society with the civic spirit of the ancient Greek *polis*. In his early writings, he imagined the recreation of the (alleged) Greek harmony between citizen and state by means of a transformation of Christianity into a combination of Kantian freedom and Greek folk religion.

Later he came to see that any attempt to return to the spirit of antiquity was mistaken. Christianity by introducing the spirit of free subjectivity annulled the possibility of any immediate unity between citizen and state. Thus modern politics has to accept the division between private and public, between civil society and the political state. The dangers of attempting to make men purely citizens were dramatised for Hegel by Rousseau's theory of the general will, which in the French Revolution had begotten the terror.

But so in a different way had utilitarian ethics, the principle of the liberal

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consumer-capitalism, celebrated by Fukuyama. Liberal individualism was an insufficient principle of political community. Such societies were atomistic and turned the polity into a 'heap' of individuals, which, if left to its own devices, would be torn apart by the ravages of an unregulated competitive economy. Hegel's solution was a complex pluralistic political structure in which individuals would be drawn into the orbit of the state through their membership of particular groups, and in which, through a process of education and participation, the individual would come to partake in the spiritual meaning of citizenship.

Hegel's own ideals, described in the *Philosophy Of Right*, have not stood the test of time. His complex, differentiated, monarchical state could not withstand the long-term pressures exerted by the principles of popular sovereignty and universal suffrage. Furthermore, even in terms of his own theory, his legitimation of the state from the perspective of the wage-earner looked feeble. Marx was quite right to see that there was no real place for the proletarian in Hegel's civil society. But looked at in a more negative sense, Hegel's thought proved prophetic. For Marx never confronted Hegel's point about the necessary complexity of a modern polity; and his own proposal to abolish civil society and annul the distinction between public and private had barely-considered authoritarian implications in principle, just as communist states recapitulated the process of terror in practice. In this sense Fukuyama's underlining of marxism's historical failure to provide an acceptable alternative to Hegel's distinction between public and private is substantially correct.

But Fukuyama's own analysis is profoundly unhistorical and far removed from the dialectical inspirations of the *Phenomenology*. The real Hegel, had he been alive in the 20th century, might have taken some delight in demonstrating how, during the cold war, the opposing positions interpenetrated each other and revealed each other's lack, much in the way in which he had analysed the contest between 'Enlightenment and Faith' in the 18th century. Fukuyama, on the other hand, simply imprints 'liberal democracy' on Napoleon's standard at the battle of Jena and then charts its unchanged progress through the world in the subsequent two centuries.

But *democracy* was not part of Hegel's agenda, nor was it part of the agenda of liberalism at the time at which Hegel wrote. In this century, it has been the advances towards democracy rather than liberalism per se which has succeeded in turning communism into an undesirable authoritarian alternative. Yet it was only in response to popular pressure fuelled by socialist and even communist ideas that democracy has become a normal state of affairs in the advanced, and to some extent, developing parts of the world since the second world war.

The present global triumph of liberal capitalism is unlikely to be a long-lasting affair. It says more about the weakness and exhaustion of the historical alternatives offered to it than about the intrinsic strength of liberal capitalism itself. A situation in which three-quarters of the world lives in chronic debt and could be described in Kojèvian master-slave terms hardly suggests that the end of history is near. It rather suggests history developing by 'its negative side' – an epoch in which the vacuum left by the demise of marxism and secular anti-imperialism is being filled by fundamentalist religion and atavistic nationalism. In the heartlands of liberal democracy itself, the progress of civil society is being accompanied by a swelling underclass – Hegel's *Pöbel* – and Marx's 'opium of the people' has now been replaced by the real thing. Finally, we are told that the untrammelled development of the forces of production, formerly celebrated by liberals and marxists alike, has brought the world to the brink of environmental catastrophe. This hardly suggests a situation in which 'what is real is rational and what is rational is real'. Any good Hegelian must fervently hope that the 'World Spirit' will take another step forward as quickly as possible. ●

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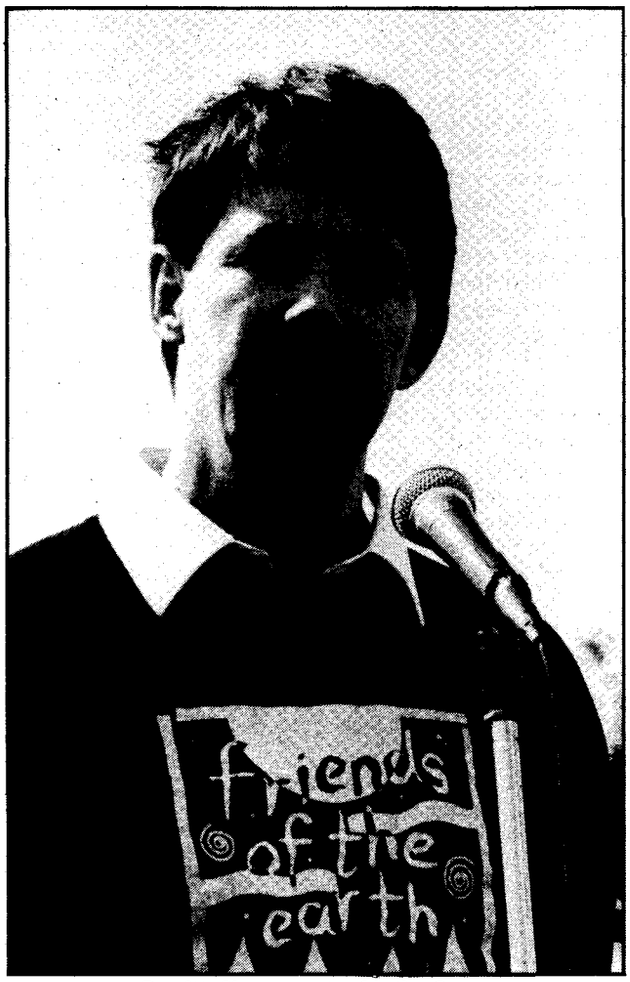

Porritt: No easy votes for the Greens

Waiting In The Wings

Are the Greens here to stay? What kind of party must they become? **Sarah Benton** examines the prospects for the Greens

For the time being, the Greens should give thanks for Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system. It allows them to claim a moral victory for their political stand without having to agonise over how to use the power a different system would give them. For the time being, Greens can continue as the victims of the system, a suitable martyrdom for a party which comes from the utopian and apocalyptic wing of politics.

This moment of powerless prestige will pass. Before it does, the Green Party has an essential breathing space in which to work out what it's going to be and how it's going to act. It can start from two premises. The first is that, however squeezed or inflated its support is by the British electoral system, the international demand for ecological action is not going away. That demand creates the need for a British Green Party to exist. Unlike the SDP and SLD it does not have to create its own place at the moveable feast of centre-ground politics.

The second is that if it doesn't move quickly, its own internal divisions could suffocate or split it. There is not simply the long-running dispute between professionals and amateurs. There is also the huge gulf between those who think they are answerable to the planet, and that green parties are merely its earthly stewards; and those who see themselves as following a long line of campaigning for the oppressed, as tribunes of the people. That conflict was expressed in the compromise reached on population policy at the Green Party conference in September this year. The stewards raised the issue and wanted the party to adopt a goal of reducing the British population from over 55m to 30m. The tribunes would have preferred not to have a policy at all, but compromised by deleting any reference to particular numbers or time spans.

On one thing, all Greens are agreed. They are not a party like any other. 'The Green Party mission,' Jonathon Porritt told their conference, 'is to create a form of politics that transcends the left-right continuum. You can unapologetically dare to be green and nothing else but green.' He distinguished between the 'light greens' (those who flavour their politics with a little greenery) and the 'dark greens', the true apostles. Others simply dub mainstream politicians as 'grey'.

This is not quite as fresh and new as it sounds. The SDP also launched itself on a grateful electorate insisting that, far from fitting into the left-right continuum, its entire *raison d'être* was to break the mould. Its women members in particular, rather than its Labour Party refugees (economic migrants?), assiduously sought new political forms for

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their party which would make it a kinder and gentler place. Many Liberals shared that aspiration for their own party.

So, can the Greens succeed where other parties have failed? And if they do escape that mould, how will they derive a freedom to operate in British politics, and, just as important, from whom will they get the power to be effective in British politics? And for what?

What gives the Greens their hope of success is the international actuality of ecological crisis. Like the peace movement a few years ago, and communism in its early days, greens speak for a crisis that transcends the structures of the nation-state. (In these days of writing socialism out of history, it is easy to forget the interwar international crisis of capitalism, and the apocalyptic belief that only socialism would avert disaster.) The small and disputatious voice of British Green-Party speakers is magnified a hundred times by green voices all over Europe.

The language of environmentalism is spoken by mystical Russians seeking the restoration of the Russian soul, by Latvian pragmatists appalled that their land has been laid waste by Soviet industrialisation, by Hungarian democrats who see the link between a vital folk-culture and resistance to centralised bureaucrats, by Estonians and Slovenes who yearn to join the community of Europe. This international language lends British greens an authority and a sense of purpose which they would not have on their own merits. Mrs Thatcher has recognised exactly this when she claims East Europeans as her followers.

If that voice rang out particularly loudly in Britain in the Euro-election, that is because the yearning to hang on to their countryside with one hand, while making a grab for Europe with the other, is particularly strong in Britain. Or rather, the right hand felt Britain's countryside was peculiarly under threat while the left ran for a political community which Thatcherism did not dominate.

So far so good. But these powerful feelings cannot be owned by the Green Party; indeed, their very power makes it inevitable that other parties will pick them up and run with them. To many Conservatives it was a tremendous relief to be able to say again, 'We are the natural party of conservation', and at their conference this year they said it over and over again. But *every* political party, including the National Front, has been able, quite honourably, to unearth a lineage of concern for the land, or for Europe, for internationalism, for natural harmony, in its own history.

If the Green Party is being sustained by an international green movement, what happens if all the other parties absorb the main practical demands of the movement? For it is the pressure groups which have nurtured that movement as much as, if not more than, the green parties. The green pressure groups, most notably Friends of the Earth – of which Jonathon Porritt is the retiring director – and Greenpeace, already have their role worked out. They have been brilliant publicists for particular causes which in turn have fed the general cause of ecology. And they have been partially-successful lobbyists for particular causes in the private corridors of Whitehall, parliament and business. It is in part their success, as apolitical bodies, which people voted for in the June Euro-election.

Should the party strategy then be to claim that it is the only political voice for this movement of pressure groups? Jonathon Porritt tackled the problem in his Green conference address. The Green Party may be the heart and soul of the movement, he told party members, but it cannot be the movement's arm. 'If you ask us...' – meaning the pressure groups – '...to endorse you, you will be told to grow up. Our entire operation depends on being independent of party.'

Their freedom to fulfil the role of publicists and lobbyists comes from their lack of a mass membership. Unlike CND in the early 1980s they are not substitute parties. Indeed, their observation of the rise and drift down of CND firmed up the pressure groups' determination not to have mass memberships. As a result, both Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have a reputation for autocratic management. But nobody, however irritated by their exclusion from the directors' ears, disputes the efficacy of this form of undemocratic policy-making.

In which case, why bother with a political party? Because nobody disputes the fact that the 15% vote for the Greens in the Euro-election delivered a jolt to the British political system which no amount of pressure-group activity had managed. As Sara Parkin said: 'If we weren't so worried that the wasted time may literally have cost us the earth, the panic caused in the breasts of the Westminster parties over the Green Party vote would be laughable.' The Green Party is the only vehicle for changing the public language and priorities of British politics, and the only vehicle for mass participation in green politics.

So what are those politics to be? Last century, when Britain (and Europe) was entering the era of mass political parties, the democratic argument was that a party was the vehicle for the self-liberation of a class. That is why the working class should have its own Labour Party, rather than continue to support the Liberals, many of whom were as radical as any Labour MP was to become. The assumption of modern political scientists was that those political parties survived which had a core of self-interest, and that this self-interest would always negotiate the twists and turns of ideological change.

If the Green Party is the earthly steward for the planet, it has no core of self-interest. It acts on behalf of a cause. You could argue that their core self-interest is the survival of the whole human race. And here there is a paradox in the party. Those who offer the most apocalyptic vision of the destruction of the planet, and thus of human life, tend to be from the earthly-steward wing of the party. Yet it is the earthly stewards in the party who are accused of having the least interest in human aspirations. For instance, co-chair Liz Crosbie was criticised at the September conference for being out of sympathy with the anti-capitalist politics of the tribunes of the people. Faced with this criticism, Liz says, 'At the end of the day, we don't have time to dismantle capitalism in 30 years.'

'What gives the Greens their hope of success is the international actuality of ecological crisis'

This would seem to be the authentic green voice for which both Sara Parkin and Jonathon Porritt called at the conference. It fears getting absorbed by the existing political conflict between capitalism and socialism and so losing its unique green voice. It is also the voice of *realpolitik* and party professionalism. In the urgent task of moulding a functioning political party out of the motley membership, intense debate on capitalism is a blind alley. Far better to spend the time thinking of how to raise money for the full-time expertise which the party so needs to grow.

In the short term, such voices are undoubtedly right: the party's freedom to operate will depend on its ability to articulate an authentic green programme, not be the tail that wags the Labour or Tory dog. But while a pressure group can focus on authentic green issues, such as toxic waste or biodegradable litter, a political party has to deal with the common body of political issues. In the same address, Jonathon Porritt defined the party's four priorities in a true green language. They were consumerism, population, sustainability and what he called eco-security. It is not possible to talk for more than five minutes on one of those priorities without venturing into the conventional political world of state powers, multinationals, international agreements and defence spending. Nor should it be possible, for a party which prides itself on its attitude to sex and race, to speak for long without digging into the store of feminist and anti-racist argument.

The Green Party is faced with what may be an irresolvable contradiction; that of being a mass-membership political party and having a sea-green incorruptible political position. The future for the stewards of the earth is as the tail that wags the dog. Their sort of party can cause panic in the main parties, force them to adopt greener policies, even conclude electoral pacts. But they will remain as a catalyst and voice of apocalypse. The tribunes of the people will sustain their pressure for the party to be the political vehicle for libertarian democracy in Britain, not least because they want an alternative to the Labour Party. But if they become the dominant voice, who on the Right will heed it?●

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Debate
Smaller Worlds

In this month's *Manifesto For New Times* debate, **Giorgio Napolitano** welcomes the global challenge of new times, **Gordon Brown** draws out some economic-policy threads and **Cynthia Cockburn** questions the balance of power

Giorgio Napolitano is one of the Italian Communist Party's most senior citizens. Born in 1925 in Naples he was first elected to the Italian parliament in 1953 and is currently an MP and MEP. He is also the head of the PCI's foreign affairs bureau.

The *Manifesto For New Times* represents an important effort to rethink the problems and prospects of socialism, an effort which is called for everywhere. In Britain it responds to the need to find a successful answer to the phenonemon of Thatcherism, the development of which, moreover, has taken on a more general significance, embodying a real model of neo-conservatism. Neither in Britain nor elsewhere is it possible to combat the forces of neo-conservatism, or to offer valid alternatives, if we limit ourselves to mere denunciations, or if we appeal to traditional values and old programmes of the Left and of the labour movement. Everywhere we must come to terms with the extraordinary changes of the 1980s which are in full swing in Western capitalist societies and on a world scale.

I find the very concept of 'new times' a happy invitation. It urges research free from past schemes, free from ideological taboo. It commits the British Communist Party and left forces to face up to reality, it presents the future as difficult and exciting, calling for great intellectual and political courage.

I am not in a position to undertake here an analysis of the *Manifesto*. I only want to note that the questions it deals with are the same as those which we are now discussing in the PCI and are being discussed in many areas of the European Left. What is social progress in the age of the threat of environmental catastrophe ? Is socialism just a part of a much wider conception of universal human values and progress? What should be the division of labour between national and international politics, change in civil society and state intervention?

In this respect I think there is much work to be done on the problem of a new coming-together of class interests, national interests and those concerning the survival of the species, as a basis for a new vision of socialism. Among our interests in the survival of the species are avoiding nuclear war, any other destructive war, environmental catastrophe, and also overcoming the growing imbalance between the world's North and South.

Increasingly we cannot do without the processes of 'regional' integration in various parts of the world, and forms of world economic co-operation that lead to a real interpenetration of different systems. The causes of justice and solidarity, of the redistribution of power and wealth within the developed countries, ought not be separated from justice and solidarity between the rich areas of the world and the poorest.

The *Manifesto* reviews many traditional positions on the Left, in particular in Britain, in order to outline an alternative to a Thatcherism seen as regressive modernisation and not simply as right-wing resurgence. Looking not only at Britain but at Europe, and drawing the necessary conclusions from the dramatic crisis in the systems built by communist parties in power, the *Manifesto* denies that you can map out 'a detailed organisation of socialist society, its laws and institutions'. I too am convinced that we must abandon such an attitude and that instead we must place the accent on the aims and values of socialism, developing them in terms valid for the 90s and translating them gradually into concrete objectives of struggle and of government.

For countries like Britain and Italy, much will depend in the 90s on the directions which prevail in the realisation of the Single European Act. If I may be allowed to make one critical observation, I would say that the *Manifesto* ought perhaps to pay greater attention to the timetables and dilemmas faced by the European Community.●

Giorgio Napolitano

Translated by Ian Twigg.

'The questions the *Manifesto* deals with are discussed in many areas of the European Left'

Slowly but inexorably British socialism is being reinvigorated. Much of its new insights are tentative, and its ideas speculative, but socialism is moving forward again.

No one concept, book or thinker sums up the new developments. British socialism has never had its *Das Kapital*, or single visionary genius. It has always been at its best syncretic and inclusive, so it would be surprising if any single source of thinking were to dominate now.

But from the writings of Nove, Hodgson, Leadbeater, Hirst, Gamble, even the non-socialist David Marquand with his idea of a developmental state, and many others, it is clear that left thinking has been evolving right across the spectrum. To this the *Manifesto For New Times* is an interesting and, at times, an original contribution. Like much of the recent work it is more useful for its analysis than its prescriptions, more interesting for its historical breadth than for its minute particulars of policy, but it is both stimulating and a broadly-ranging synopsis of many of the new insights.

In common with most contributions to the debate about the future, the *Manifesto For New Times* is clear about what has changed. The economy is global, companies are transnational, capital flows are instantaneous, the mass-production hierarchical factory is but one of the economy's commanding heights (among which are retail and service companies and businesses producing custom-built, technology-driven precision products for niche markets), the class structure has been modified, new political forces, not least the women's movement and green politics are in play, and the rapid growth in poverty, inequality and division require urgent attention.

The requirement that people control their own destinies is no less central ('We believe that economic and political power in this country and internationally will have to be transformed'), but the means whereby it will be advanced has had to be reappraised.

There is a broad agreement among new writers that if individuals are to realise their full potential – bridging the gap between what they are and what they have it in them to become – then society must become more than a huge marketplace of individual buyers and sellers. Instead of the Hayek vision of selfish individuals endlessly competing against each other stands a socialist view of a community of citizens pursuing objectives they hold in common.

Other principles follow: that socialists cannot ignore the clear division between those who have power over others through ownership and those who need to be empowered by policies that promote equality; that socialism's distinctive feature is not to abolish markets but to recognise and tackle their limitations and that to achieve common objectives the community must

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act together; and that in whatever forms collective action is embraced the state must be accountable.

The *Manifesto For New Times* appreciates that the nation-state is now too small a stage for resolving the big issues and too big a stage for resolving the small ones, supports the pressing case for decentralisation and devolution throughout Britain, and accepts that the principle ought to be that decisions should be made as close as possible to their point of impact. But that means that, in a global economy, popular power will have to be exercised internationally, nationally and locally, appropriately and according to constraints and requirements.

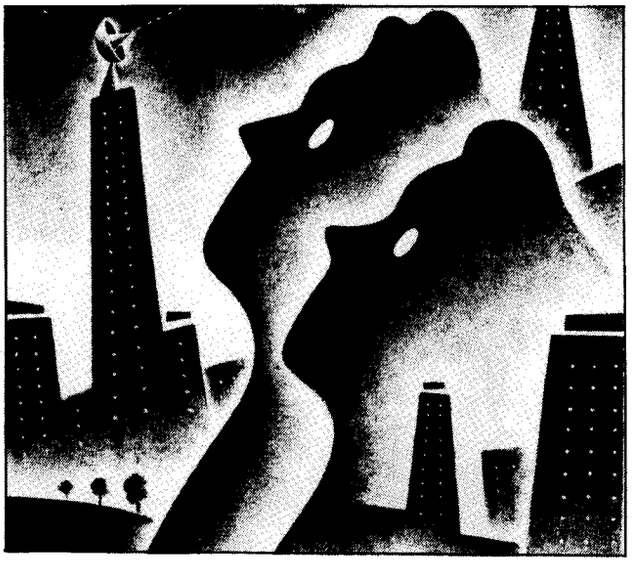
Recognising that the nation-state is an all-too-ineffective barrier against transitional capital, the *Manifesto For New Times* rightly calls for 'a new international settlement'. But in a world where 80% of capital flows are speculative, where the global company has taken over from the multinational, and where, astonishingly, the flows of capital are from South to North, rather than North to South, it is the precise forms that international co-operation and co-ordination must take – and the new international financial institutions that are required – that needs to be addressed in detail.

Equally, the challenge is to develop new forms of popular decision-making at a local level, relying less on the invisible hand of the market and more on the visible hands of people making decisions for themselves. At various points in the *Manifesto* there is a call for 'a decentralised state working in alliance with groups in society', 'popular control over economic decisions of importance', and a 'decentralised, open, enabling state'. Yet at the same time the *Manifesto* affirms the need for 'a state capable of taking determined strategic action to sort out problems'. That does not mean a centralised state and a command economy. But nor is the concept of 'an enabling state' sufficiently accurate to describe the multiple and diverse roles that the community expects of its institutions at a local, national and international level. As with a national government, a local authority will have, at various times, to function as an owner, regulator and contractor, and at other times, as catalyst, co-ordinator, financier and partner with others, active in many areas but necessarily accountable in all.

To achieve that accountability, the new popular socialism must not only guarantee individual rights and choice but be participatory. And it will be based on more than the right to citizenship, for not only are political and social rights in need of strengthening but economic rights too. Working out what we mean by an equal right to participate in the decisions that matter at every level is a major task for socialists over the coming years.●

Gordon Brown

Gordon Brown, 38, is Labour's Treasury spokesperson. After an early bout of infamy as troublesome student rector of Edinburgh University, he was a presenter for Scottish TV for a period, becoming an MP in 1983. He gave up smoking in 1986. His latest book, *Where There Is Greed* (Mainstream), was published earlier this year.



The *Manifesto For New Times* marks a break with the past in numerous ways. It was written by a group of whom almost half were women. It doesn't forget class, yet it allows room for our other identities as women, black people, gays. It has its feet planted firmly in everyday life so that flexible, responsive and universal childcare, for instance, becomes the justification for the grander gestures (abolishing the House of Lords, inaugurating a constitution) rather than flowing from them. The *Manifesto* moves on from the redistribution of resources attempted in the postwar welfare state to something that project forgot: the redistribution of power. It speaks of empowering women relative to men, the local against the central, the individual against state and corporation.

Why is it then that my ungrateful soul responds with a string of protests: 'Hang on there!', 'Just a bit', 'But, but...'? I think it's the feeling that in 'new times' the enemy has gone away. What brought me into left politics as a young woman was a sense of danger. There seemed to be terrible forces ranged against the simple pursuit of everyday life for everyday people. I didn't particularly want to spend my evenings printing leaflets and haranguing the council but there seemed little choice. Things were being taken away, something was pushing people down. Later, I didn't particularly want to lay my (by then older) body on the road in front of police horses outside airbases. But there was this feeling that desperate dangers called for risky responses.

The *Manifesto*'s vision for the 1990s is a set of progressive 'settlements' resolving the central problems of British society. It is all very measured. There will be an international settlement, a democratic settlement, a settlement between men and women. Lovely. The usage echoes the common phrase for the arrangements of the 1945 period: 'the postwar settlement'. Then, however, the working women and men of Britain had just won the war for the ruling

'Today, I don't have the feeling the City banks or the multinationals or even men, are casting around for the white flag'

Cynthia Cockburn is a researcher and writer in the social sciences, based at City University, London. She has adult daughters, lives with women and has been involved in the women's movement. She is a member of the editorial board of *Marxism Today* as a 'friendly non-communist' and has written widely on technological change, work, men and masculinity.

class. They had to settle with us. Today, I don't have the feeling the City banks or the multinationals or even men, heaven knows, are casting around for the white flag. The advent of Gorbachev may give us a break. But danger still seems all around. Has the CIA given up dealing in drugs to finance assassinations? Are the multinationals no longer using up young women in Third-World factories, making them old before they have a chance to be young? Has fundamentalist religion not got designs on us?

The proposed means for making the new times work for us is 'campaigns': consumer campaigns, anti-privatisation campaigns. Many readers will surely cry: 'We're doing that already.' Yes, campaigns develop awareness, they soften the blows, they moderate the harshness of the policies imposed against us. The forces ranged against the changes we want, however, are adaptable and clever. Perhaps we had a little influence in getting nuclear missiles out of Greenham, but they are being redeployed as sea- or air-launched weapons.And have we even touched the international arms trade? Women's refuges (praised as a model by the *Manifesto*) have helped many women. But they haven't made a dent as yet in the regime of male violence or the pornography market.

The *Manifesto* is not altogether blind to 'unaccountable concentrations of power'. And it introduces a nice post-modern perception: that power cannot usefully be smashed or stolen, only 'unravelled'. Through the new social movements we have a better sense today where the loose ends are. My worry is that this old tangle of yarn has a habit of pulling back.●

Cynthia Cockburn

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SATELLITE

Why does *The Sun* shine? **Andy Medhurst** reports

Sunsational

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this month, *The Sun* is Britain's most popular daily read. The attitudes it espouses are pernicious, often dangerous, but saying so doesn't get us very far. To understand what makes *The Sun* tick, it's more productive to step back a little, shelve the comforts of denunciatory rhetoric and attempt a relatively dispassionate analysis.

This involves facing up to the, perhaps unpalatable, fact that the people who read *The Sun* do so not primarily out of a strict ideological allegiance, but because it gives them pleasure. It entertains on a massive scale.

The Sun is successful, and its success is instructive, because it plugs into and plays on certain feelings that are characteristic of the 1980s. In many ways it holds the key to the heart of popular Thatcherism. For this reason alone it needs looking into in order to tease out how it locks into the complexity of the Thatcherite project. This involves buying a few copies, so watch out for your street cred if you're seen in the furtive act of purchase.

When considering *The Sun* and the nature of its readership, it's crucial to avoid any notion of false consciousness. *Sun*-readers aren't merely passive dupes. There is no simple manipulative plot and Jasper Carrott's easy-laugh sniggers about *Sun*-readers are little more than a shrewd way of making it apparently ok to poke fun at working people.

The preferred subject matter of *The Sun* is the same list of issues and personalities that are found in any other tabloid – sex, drugs, sport, soaps, animals and royalty. The ideal *Sun* headline might be something like: 'I SAW UNITED SUPREMO IN NUDE ROMP WITH MODEL AT BALMORAL ACID BASH CLAIMS KYLIE'.

Its style is easy to parody, as any copy of *Viz* comic will show, but this only underlines how deeply *Sun*-speak has entered the national consciousness. We all know what 'page three' means, however we might feel about the paper's casual sexism. The most famous word to emerge from the Falklands war is, horribly enough, 'GOTCHA!'. And there are innumerable variations on the 'super, soaraway' theme of promotional hyperbole. Hate it as we may, *The Sun* has entered the nation's linguistic bloodstream.

And there is a certain kind of skill in its use of English. Its subs have the talent to condense long, complex stories into tiny paragraphs or 'word bites'. This is also one of the characteristics of Thatcherism: a commitment to simplification. Complexity is rejected, regarded as unnecessary sophistication out to bamboozle Jo Public. Key words and phrases are pulled like triggers to set off emotional responses. For both Margaret Thatcher and *The Sun*, social and political issues require the application of emotion not reason.

Linked to this is the mobilisation of 'common sense' as a failsafe category, an irresistable means of securing agreement. *The Sun* thrives on this approach. It never has any doubts about its moral position on a given issue. Its sense of impregnable rightness requires the creation of a sizeable demonology of attitudes, groups or individuals who are quite simply 'wrong'. Belonging to a union is wrong. Teaching children about racism is wrong. Being gay is wrong. There isn't a great deal of room for argument.

High in *The Sun*'s chart of pet hates is any form of institutionalised bureaucracy. Its anti-state attacks take a number of shapes, ranging from constant calls for privatisation to attacks on welfare services and social work. A particular venom is reserved for what *The Sun*, like many others on the Tory right, insists on calling the 'race-relations industry'. Here the Thatcherite loathing of state-funded bodies overlaps with another driving force of the paper's ideology, its racism. Remember the 'Hop Off You Frogs' campaign? Then there's the persistent, knee-jerk use of terms like 'nip' and 'kraut', or the shameful militaristic xenophobia of the Falklands episode.

A recent story is a classic in this respect. The headline, in that *Sun*-speak which one has to cave in and admire on occasions, was DEAR EAU DEAR. Incensed by EC criticisms of British water standards, *The Sun* sent a reporter to collect and have analysed samples of water from European rivers. Surprise, surprise, the dear old Thames came out top of the list (bar one, but that wasn't in an EC country in any case). The Tiber was described as 'little more than a sewer', the Tagus 'packed with a cocktail of chemical pollutants' and, frog-bashing to the last:

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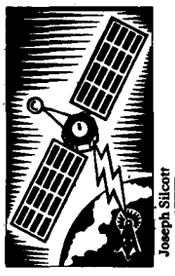
Paul Bateman



Joseph Silcott

'You would be insane to sip the Seine, one gulp could land you in hospital.'

It's all there – the British-is-best moral rectitude (the water was tested, of course, in a British laboratory), the how-dare-they resistance to interfering bureaucracy (foreign bureaucracy at that), the let's-have-a-laugh reduction of complex issues to a few puns and leaves from Alf Garnett's scrapbook.

By adopting a posture of standing up for the ordinary individual, *The Sun* can cover itself in the clothes of a crusading newspaper. But its crusades are light years away from the combative seeking of justice that characterised old pre-*Sun* tabloid journalism. At its core is an unavoidable hypocrisy; it attacks intrusions into private lives except when it commits those intrusions itself.

Tabloid journalists interviewed in a recent issue of *GQ* defended their prurient spying on the grounds that if people did nothing wrong then they'd have nothing to worry about. Again, note the employment of that subtle, flexible word 'wrong', and then try and explain this brutish fundamentalism to Elton John, to the nurses treating the dying Russell Harty who were hounded by hacks, to the mother of the child whose medical condition led *The Sun* to label him 'The Worst Brat In Britain'.

This intrusiveness is especially intriguing in *The Sun*'s relationship with royalty. It knows that tabloid-readers are eager for news, gossip, photographs, anything about the royal family, but *The Sun*, in another of its shared characteristics with the Thatcher outlook, does not maintain a respectful, deferential distance. A recent story about Marina Ogilvy was a gift. It enabled snooping and moralising, with the added bonus that it concerned one of the peripheral royals and not one of the sacred inner circle.

Dear Deidre, the paper's agony aunt, chided the transgressing Ms Ogilvy: 'You seem to be going through teenage rebellion 10 years too late...I suggest you and Paul stop rubbishing your parents so publicly and concentrate on how you are going to become a proper self-supporting family.' Hardly the bended-knee approach.

The point where *The Sun* threatens most to come into conflict with Thatcherism is one which periodically rises within the Conservative Party itself. It's the clash between the worship of the free market and the maintenance of a strict moral agenda. The Tory conference this year diverged only once from its ritual self-congratulation and flared into genuine debate around the question of Sunday-trading laws. A bit of a non-issue perhaps, but it did dramatise this conflict.

Similarly, *The Sun*'s commitment to its page three, to its tabloid urge to titillate, sits uneasily with the Thatcherite rhetoric of family values. Norman Tebbit may think that page three is simply the modern equivalent of Botticelli but, dependent on its readers as she is, it's hard to picture Margaret herself settling down with a copy.

And this is where the point about entertainment is important. *The Sun* isn't the *Salisbury Review*, it's part of the fabric of British popular culture. That might be hard to stomach, but it's impossible to deny. In much the same way that Thatcherism has finally laid to rest any automatic equation between working people and the Labour Party, so *The Sun* destroys the assumption that if something is popular it must be ideologically sound.

The Sun creates and feeds on a sense of community. It has created its own world, whose landmarks and contours are known even to those who prefer to stay outside its borders. This is the true mark of its popularity. *The Sun* is a paper for people who find 'real' news dull, pompous and unconnected with their everyday lives.

Its preference for simplification and the unmissable headline may well have paved the way for the *Sunday Sport*, which in turn has called into question the very idea that 'news' has anything to do with truth or facts.

'Norman Tebbit may think that page three is simply the modern equivalent of Botticelli but it's hard to picture Margaret herself settling down with a copy'

Maybe *The Sun* is simply being commercially shrewd by turning almost every story into a joke in an era when many people don't seem to want to take the news seriously any more. This might turn out to be its most lasting legacy.●

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FICTION

A short story by **Candia McWilliam**

A Service Industry

'It's for something special, is it then?' asked Jon, whose name was Ng really, but where's the street value in that? Lost in shipping lanes. He did not know how to address the girl whose hair he was lifting and dividing like a loving gardener. He knew her first name was Anna but he had never used it. Her appearance suggested care from without, not so much from within, as though her poise might desert her without the attentions of hairdressers, manicurists, goldsmiths and leathermen. He did not know what job she did. She had been receiving his intimate care for five years, during which time she had enquired weekly where he intended going at the weekend. In these five years, she had changed from Sorbet Whisper blonde to Slightly Foxy mid-ash.

'Very special, and I really want it to last till the evening, Jon, if you can.' She used his name firmly, but as though it were a fish she was handing to a seal, using it to reward and subdue him. She could not bear chat. She had none, it was not part of her make-up. Today, too, she wished to be calm.

To discourage conversation, she held and looked at a book; the only time this was not possible, during the washing of her greeny-grey hair, she hummed to herself. This was enough as a rule to deter interference. She turned a page of her book each time Jon folded a silver foil over a section of hair. Her earrings lay on the counter in front of her, large aquamarines, which had once belonged to her mother.

To her right was a small dark woman with her right hand in a bowl of soapy water, her left hand being creamed by a boy with an angel's face and silver hair like a baby's. He wore a watch which had cost him no money but which was worth more than a thousand train tickets to the home where he ate nightly with his parents, tonight being the chop night. The t-shirt he wore had the effect of a brassière worn for show, stimulation and uplift; it drew attention to his silvery armpits, veined muscles, and swelling chest. He took some deep-brown gloss and began to apply it to the long nails of the dark woman, who was saying, '...off at JFK but we had no time so we couldn't do even a bit of shopping, but when we did get to the Vineyard it was fine because the crowd were still there and we kept the plane so we'd quite a gas after that at the Derby and then up to the Brown Palace. And Jack got in a deal.' The angel at her left hand, who had scraped the city from under her nails with a pointed wooden stick, was in heaven, taking the words and remembering them, each brand name, place name, surname, twice gratifying, as a sign of friendliness from Mrs Tulipglass, and as an addition to the life he was building for himself, a life where he would know these places, these people, and be as fantastically rude to people like himself as Mrs Tulipglass and her like had been to him. He was pleased he did not have to waste the morning with the quiet one with her book. You'd never pick up anything – useful – from her. Kept her mouth closed and her legs too, he guessed. Waiting for the big one. Still, with chicks, it was all they had. Now he, he was different, he spread himself thin. Nothing unsafe, but a little tweak here or there made all the diff.

Under the pink dome of the hairdrier, next now to a beauty with her shih-tzu and her cigarette lighter at her groin, long legs out to trip the the bearers of iced tea, Anna approached her thoughts as nearly as she dared. The heat of the flaps of silver, and the science-fiction tinkle whenever she moved her head, had distracted her, but now, with the swarf of her hair on big rollers and pinned to her skull, her head held still in one place and she could not escape thinking. The important thing was to behave as usual and above all to learn from them, these servants of grooming and the bloom of money.

When Jon released her, lifting the drier like an invalid's head, she gave him a grateful smile, as though he had quenched her thirst. He guided her, dry with heat, back to her chair, and pulled each blue cylinder from its snail of striped hair. Then, in a sequence of light, firm, drags downwards with a shining brush, he restored her to herself in her tabby casque of hair. She put the aquamarines on to her ears inside the pale fall, as one might a brooch on to a fine wool scarf, the scarf not being of one's flesh. Her hair, so important to her, was another expensive falsehood. She overtipped Jon. Thank God her nails had kept from last week, rosy drops, painted white underneath at the tip and fed at the root with oil of almond.

She crossed the road to the figure studio. While its name suggested the life class at an art college, it was in fact where people most hoped not to meet one another, in pursuit, lying sandwiched in ultra-violet lit perspex, of a meretricious suntan. Anna had not gone further than that, though she knew girls who had spent days here being optimised, having their thighs toned, their breasts creamed. Jon was right; her appearance was maintained with wax and polish and paint and gloss, not with regime or surgery. She would burst all at once. In the changing room was a very tall naked girl with pale pink hair to her waist; she looked like an enormous doll, but for her pink shaven sex. Her muscles were tight as though displayed for dissection. Anna thought she must be a contortionist, or a sexchange. Her dewy face and bobbed nose made that possible, and who knew about the rest? Can you determine now even how you want to look *there*? Anna wondered, lying in her tanning-coffin.

Prone in the sunbed, it was once more hard not to worry about what was to come; all those maintenance activities meant so much suspended time, time waiting for pigments to take, for melanin to accrete, for glue to set. Halfway through her tanning hour, Anna was as grateful to the buzzer which told her to turn over as if it had been a school bell releasing her. And yet she had chosen to be there, and here was another half-hour to go. Surely nothing very bad would happen if she ceased all this care for herself? She had seen girls who did not care, after all, and they managed. Even as she thought this, she felt panic; she was addicted to the routines of her vanity. They did not, as they might for a French-woman, free her from worry about her appearance; they appeased momentarily her hungry vanity, that was all. Today was the first day she had thought about her sugar cage in this distant way, and she had some instinct that to think so grimly about it was to presage its cracking and the last thing she wanted was that; she could not bear escape with its attendant responsibilities. That was why, this evening, she intended to commence the winding-in of the silver fish upon its silken string. And for that, she must

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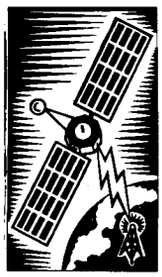

Beverly Levy

look her best.

The small knell of the second half-hour sounded. Anna stood up and wrapped herself in a pale pink towel, as though leaving real sunlight. A girl with a prophylactic Nordic air brought her some mineral water in a long glass. Aerated water, Italian, with lime. There was quite a choice of bubble-gauge in these temperance zones. In the 1920s, the rose of champagne blushed or blenched to complement the *couture*, and now there's water *pétillant* or all air (even less fattening) for every taste. Even flat.

The walk to the *visagiste* took her past a florist's shop, so she took the advantage of its cool rich scents to kill her appetite. It was not easy to stay slim, and part of the trick was to kill appetite by feeding another sense. The water running down the inside of the windows, and the refrigerator of greenish and flat-faced white orchids, the clean but heavy scent, all soothed Anna, and rarefied her gloom. She felt incidental to herself. What did it matter how this evening went, anyway? She was just a thing, a pretty thing, and flowers like these would be repeating their own loveliness perfectly, long after she had gone. She often administered to herself these draughts of objectivity (as though she were wheeling slowly over the earth, interpreting its surface) when she had slept with someone particularly not right. She could see deep down things and what she saw was – nothing – in those moments. She did not dare comfort herself in this manner very often since, as a rule, she relied upon detail to give shape and meaning to her days.

The man who gave shape and meaning to Anna's face lived over a butcher's shop, one way, he said, of having a fancy address and affording it. The butcher's shop was strictly bespoke: the chickens were trimmed with maizey fat, the steak tartare was in patties ready-dimpled for the egg-yolk; the kidneys resembled little blue satin cushions. The trenchers of steak lay upon marble whose pores were perfectly clean. There was no parsley and there were no prices.

Max was Australian and had found his own way of being a helot of glamour. He abused his beauties. They took it with pleasure because he was brilliant and could do anything at all with his brushes and swabs and tips, and he was very handsome, so when he smiled you felt warm. Easy for a man, thought Anna, there are so few real ones about. But the trouble is I can't steal his style this evening.

Max first cleaned her face with something astringent which made each feature feel renewed and primed. He did this again, lifting and pressing against her cheek and temple bones until he had moulded the clay ready for the glaze. He tried colours on the inside of his wrist, so he looked like a rainbow suicide. As he tried each colour, he tried it in three kinds of light, the daylight, glaring electric light, and golden muted light. This last was because he had asked Anna, 'Where's it for?' Usually she would reply with the name of a theatre or a restaurant or a hostess the colour of whose drawing room was familiar to Max, but today she said, 'Indoors, Max, and about sevenish'.

Anna wasn't bad though and he liked painting those beigey ones because you could make just what you wanted of them. He didn't mind a bit the thought of his facework leading to a bit of gold-digging. Serve the punters right if they couldn't tell it was a paint job. Max was not a mystique man. He was saving for a ranch so he and Bones, whose modelling career would have to end sometime, could settle. Bones' biggest contract was a pipe tobacco firm; a quarter of a big one and don't smoke any other brands, easy enough when you don't smoke any-

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BETA

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Tel: 01-439 7034 Fax: 01-494 2700

Contact: Paul Styles (Director)
John Woodward (Deputy Director)

The Independent Programme Producers Association (IPPA) is the trade association for British independent television producers. Founded in 1981 by producers making programmes for the newly-established Channel 4, IPPA now represents some 700 production companies based throughout England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Over the last 3 years, IPPA has led a successful campaign for 25% of all new UK television programming to be made by independent producers. IPPA continues to represent independent producers in negotiations with the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 to determine codes of practice and trading guidelines. IPPA continues to liaise with all UK broadcasters and Government to influence decisions that may affect independent producers.

IPPA advises its members on all matters relating to independent production for television. For further information, contact the IPPA office.

FICTION

how, said Bones.

Max gave Anna sleepy eyes and a face whose focus was in its breadth, the top lip darker than the bottom lip. He made her face seem widest at its middle line, like a pansy. He also liked her because she paid, nice and neat, a hundred and then the tip on top, all cash, not like the ones who talked about Gstaad and Cowdray and then forgot their chequebooks or pretended their custom paid him. It did of course, the butcher's free meat proving quite a sweetener too. The butcher couldn't charge a man who clearly hobnobbed with crowned heads, so Bones and Max got all the protein ('Just wipe its arse and chop off its horns and I'll grill it.') they were used to back in Oz.

The butcher was a good man, who delivered to his very grandest clients on his bike to keep them secure in their illusions and their generosity, saving the Corniche (oxblood and palomino) all that wear on her synchromesh in traffic.

Anna saw her face three times in Max's mirror; she liked what she saw there. She looked at once clean and dirty, poised and abandoned. No wonder he was an expensive habit.

'Bless you, Max,' she said, hardly patronising. 'Bless you,' he replied, kissing the centre of the top of her head, looking down on to the star of crown, where the streaks had already started to grow out, since four hours ago. The imperfectibility of women once they start to muck about, thought Max, and forgot her as soon as she was gone from his airy room on top of the meat shop.

Anna had an hour to go.

She went to Brown's Hotel and ordered tea. She was dressed in clothes the colour of milk chocolate, a brown with some pink in it, a colour kind to skin. Her tea cost seven pounds; she did not eat the neat sandwiches or the fruit cake. It would have been more than her life was worth to put on weight now. She made the pot of rusty tea last and she ate the plateful of six slices of lemon. Seeing her creamy shoes with their bitter chocolate shiny tips and thin straps, a provincial tart taking tea across the room thought how unfair it was that some people never had to do a hand's turn. Or an anything else's. She finished her cake and sandwiches and pocketed the sugar. They liked you fat.

Ng, or Jon, had wondered what Anna did. She simply consumed. She did it beautifully, after all. She had been consuming more hectically recently, it was true, but no one was close enough to her to realise this, except the suppliers to her habit of looking perfect, her frenzied quest for calm and radiant beauty.

'He made her face seem widest at its middle line, like a pansy. He also liked her because she paid, nice and neat'

Tonight would test the beauty. Anna's hair, Anna's face, Anna's nails, Anna's body, left the hotel, a calculated unity. The amalgam that was Anna set off towards a service flat behind Bond Street.

Living as though she had a fur for each degree of frost God might send had corrupted Anna. Believing in the implications of her face and body, she had overdrawn on them. She had believed in the practical-sounding nostrums of vanity – every effort you make now will repay you twice later, your face is your fortune, invest it wisely. Drawing shoulder-to-shoulder with the suppliers who had helped her feed her illusion, who had colluded in the self-deception which made it so easy now to take this step, Anna joined the service industries.

Her first client was a furrier, who appreciated her feigned affection and the complication of her underpinnings. You had to hand it to these class hookers, they made out almost like real girls. He was touched too by the sight of the big fake aquamarines at the side of his glass of water afterwards. His wife would never accept rubbish like that.●

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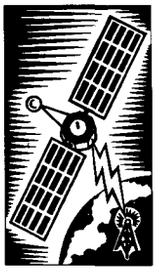
Politicians don't watch enough tv, **Mark Lawson** warns

Broadcast Views

The Daily Herald Collection
The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford

Media watch: A square deal for square eyes?



It is depressing, but important, to accept that one of the yawn subjects of the moment – even in the educated press – is the white paper on the future of broadcasting. In one sense, this is unsurprising. The people who enjoy television and possibly even care about it – the viewers – have no interest in policy or the logistics and politics of transmission and production. Media consumers rarely do.

But television viewers should be concerned about the politics of the industry. Not least because those who are making the policy are only interested in the logistics and location of production. They care nothing for television or viewers. And those involved in the debate have failed to expose the concrete applications of all those clauses and causes explored in the white paper. They have failed to talk in detail about programmes, the DNA of the medium. The failure of the industry itself to do so can be attributed to miscalculated tactics, that of the government to simple ignorance of the specifics involved.

During the new parliamentary session, the first regular transmission of television pictures from inside the House of Commons will be broadcast in Britain. The broadcast will be the first stage of the six-month experiment in the televising of parliament, for which the present government – though grudgingly, with Mrs Thatcher voting against – is responsible. In a parliamentary session in which the bill on the future of broadcasting is to be debated it seems ironic that MPs will soon be appearing on television themselves more often than they actually manage to watch it.

Insufficient attention has been given to politicians' sheer ignorance of what is on television, or the likely nature of what – as a consequence of their policy-making – will either replace it or co-exist with it, depending on the relative pessimism of your viewpoint. It is instructive to shift focus occasionally from the abstract legislative process to the experience of the people involved in that process.

A hypothesis. A Tory MP – of whatever wetness – is about to vote in a debate on the white paper which will decide the future of television. How much television will he have watched? It is more truth than abuse to say that he is likely to have video-recorded *Yes, Prime Minister* (an escapist fantasy about a charmingly unsure and mutable national leader) and to have watched regularly the news and *Newsnight* (in case he might be on them).

This is not because of philistinism (although that is in there in the equation) but because MPs work (or, at least, are out) in the evenings. So from where will our MP's knowledge of television have come? There are two main sources: the tabloid newspapers and the constituency mailbag.

The problem is that tabloid reporting of television is famously inaccurate. A front-page story once shrieked outrage about a play in which, apparently, 'sex takes place on the top of a double-decker bus'. The mental image this suggests is of a couple fucking on a London Transport roof in Leicester Square; a clear televisual incitement to social disorder.

In fact, the truth was drabber. The play's central character lived in a converted, parked, red bus of which the top deck was his bedroom. Intercourse occurred here amid a privacy in which even a Tory MP might perform. And yet the Commons rumpus over the production took its information from the paper. With many newspapers now heavily involved in the extra-terrestrial companies (competitors for the sexy, lefty ITV and BBC) for whose existence the present government legislated, this information loop is even more cruel.

As for the evidence of his constituency mailbag, that television is a seething bed of left-wingers having sex, everyone knows that the mad and angry are always proportionately more likely to be moved to correspondence than are the equable. Everyone, that is, except MPs.

Another area of current debate in which hypothesis is instructive is that of sponsorship. This is the government's solution to the argument that, in free-market television, provision of quality programmes (current affairs, single dramas) watched by small audiences and shows for special interest groups will be downgraded.

Hypothesis one. Our broadcasting company is attempting to find sponsorship for a new small-screen production of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Our stars are Sir Rex Harrison (recreating his most famous role – without the songs) and Brooke Shields. Well, we can drop all of our blue-chip applicants into a bag and pick one.

Hypothesis two. Our company is looking for up-front cash for its slated production of *Second Nation*, a drama about a couple of new working-class Tory voters who, in 1987, bought a house with a large mortgage, buoyed-up by government boom-rhetoric. The play follows the attempts of the building society to foreclose on the mortgage. Funny, our phone has gone quiet this time.

Of course, those who are legislating the future of television, the authors and supporters of the interminably-debated white paper, do not supply such rough examples in support of their theories. They do not have the information to construct them. They are not concerned with what their abstract legislation is going to mean out there in the sofa. But viewers *are* going to be affected by the politics of the industry. They should, perhaps, begin to imagine a page of programme information in, say, five years' time; Channel 56, 11.45, KP Nuts presents: *The State Opening Of Parliament.*●

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"A FIRST RATE MOVIE WITTY, AMUSING, DEEPLY THOUGHTFUL AND THOROUGHLY UNUSUAL."
BARRY NORMAN - FILM 89

THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICS PRIZE — SEX, LIES AND VIDEOTAPE
PALME D'OR — SEX, LIES AND VIDEOTAPE
BEST ACTOR — JAMES SPADER
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL 1989

"EROTIC, FUNNY, PAINFUL AND WHOLLY ORIGINAL." ALEXANDER WALKER - EVENING STANDARD

"GREAT POWER AND CONVICTION... FUNNY, PERCEPTIVE, IMMACULATELY WROUGHT." GEOFF ANDREW - TIME OUT

"SHARPLY FUNNY ... SODERBERGH'S SCRIPT IS TRUE, TENDER AND BRISTLING WITH WIT."
NIGELLA LAWSON - SUNDAY TIMES

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"SEXY AND SHOCKING." EMPIRE

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CANNON PICCADILLY 437 3561
1.10 (not Sun)
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11.15pm Fri & Sat

The Screen on Baker St.
4.45 6.45 8.55
11.15pm Sat

AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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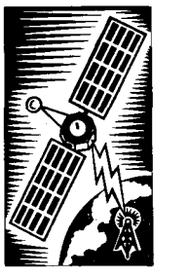
How are we responding to the Aids crisis?

Condom Nation



There's been a down-curve in the level of panic about Aids. It seems that it is no longer public enemy number one. This is partly because government and media have moderated their scare tactics and partly because the emphasis now is more on developing strategies and drugs to prevent and treat HIV infection, Aids and Aids-related complexes. But it's also because we're getting used to the threat of Aids – whether that means dealing with it day to day or sticking our heads in the sand.

The government has chosen December 1, World Aids Day, to launch its latest ad-campaign. The emphasis will be on 'life skills' – from 'saying no' to raising the subject of condoms. Recent ads have shown a commitment to getting down to the nitty-gritty of health education, but there's also been conflict around what level of revelation about our sex-lives is acceptable.

In September the government ruled against funding for the National Sexual Lifestyles Survey (whose findings would be of great value in the attempt to chart and check the spread of HIV) for being too intrusive. Is this just another of Thatcherism's hypocrisies, or is it more a reflection of the paradoxes that still surround sex, how we think about it, and its place in our culture?

Leaving aside the issue of any conscious or unconscious political and moral programme in Aids advertising, do ads and information change what we as individuals actually do (and don't do)? Or do we simply take in this new knowledge on a rational level?

In the following section of a long and open conversation **Caroline Harris** and **Jenni Moore** joined three women: Amanda (24, television director), Denise (22, advertising sales), Lauren (23, unemployed) and three men: Robert (25, fashion stylist), Chris (28, journalist), Alan (24, sales assistant), to talk about Aids, condoms and safer sex. We started out by relating the initial impact of Aids and the first tv campaign on our lives. ●

AND SHE'S TOO EMBARRASSED
TO ASK HIM
TO USE A CONDOM?
A condom can help stop you getting HIV, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that leads to AIDS.
So never, ever, feel shy about asking your boyfriend to use one.
AIDS. YOU'RE AS SAFE AS YOU WANT TO BE.

Lauren I remember a programme where they went up to a girl in the audience and asked, 'Would you carry a condom in your bag?' and she said, 'No. It's not the sort of thing I'd like to do.' And they suggested that was really bad. It seems the idea is that young people go screwing around anyway, so you ought to have a condom. But that's completely the wrong attitude. It's much more a question of: 'Is this really what I should be doing anyway?'

Chris Do you think of safer sex in terms of what you do, or who you do it with?

Lauren Both.

Robert When the Aids thing first broke my fear was more than it is now. I don't think it's being *blasé*, but it's a choice of whether to give up sex completely – not as if it's a big part of my life really – or take risks, which you've got to do, in a way, to live. It's not a case of who you sleep with, because you can't tell. I wouldn't even think about going for an Aids test now. It doesn't seem as important as it did a few years ago.

Lauren At that time, Aids was supposed to be taking over the world. And it doesn't seem to be doing it. Not that we don't have to be careful, but you think, 'Where's the problem?'

Denise I didn't feel it was a personal threat or risk until someone I knew died of it. When we found out everybody was tracing back through his whole sex life, trying to work out who'd slept with him and who hadn't. People were getting totally paranoid.

Chris One friend of mine is very concerned about getting the virus. But she has a problem raising the whole subject of Aids and condoms with people she's going to sleep with.

Amanda On the tube and in airports there are some good ads: posters of a condom and a spotlight with quite a catchy slogan.

Jenni 'Don't go too far without one...'

Amanda That's right. You can actually relate to them, they're not too prudish or judgemental. They're saying, 'OK, do it, but think about what you're doing and be prepared.'

Lauren I just assume that the other person will also be thinking, 'We'd better use condoms'.

Jenni A lot of women I know, who were on the pill, have stopped taking it specifically so they can use condoms. It places the onus on the man for a change.

Caroline Yes! The whole issue of HIV infection means you can say: 'No, I don't want to be doing this to my body any more. I want you to take some responsibility for contraception.'

Lauren I think women are quite grateful. Also, you have to be more up-front about it all, which is a good thing.

Amanda I still find resistance from the guys I sleep with to using condoms and taking responsibility though.

Caroline *Do you find* you're always the one raising the issue?

Amanda Not always, but the majority of the time.

Chris But how late does the objection come?

Amanda Fairly late!
(Laughter)

Lauren Condoms are really just the first problem. I mean, what happens if a guy starts to go down on you? What do you say? 'Wait a second, that's really nice, but I hope you realise I can't do that back'?

Robert Though they still say the easiest way to pass on the HIV virus is through anal or vaginal intercourse, rather than oral sex.

Lauren Oh really?

Chris I think among gay men the decision not to have penetrative sex is taken more easily than with straights. Somehow it's a much bigger issue in heterosexual sex. That's something where I would draw the line – not that I wouldn't have penetrative sex, but I wouldn't do it with someone I didn't know quite well, and never without a condom.

Robert My flatmate talks about men she sleeps with and I just notice the difference in attitudes. She'll joke

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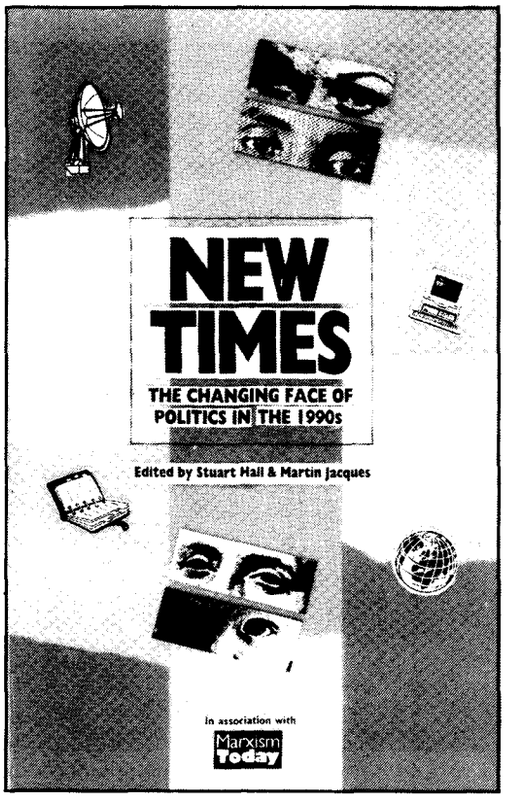
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The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s

Edited by Stuart Hall & Martin Jacques

NEW TIMES is an agenda-setting collection which has important implications not just for Western socialism, but for any serious consideration of the future of politics. Charting the fundamental political, economic and cultural restructuring that has taken place in the last decade or so throughout Western Europe and North America, this book outlines a fresh new strategy for the post-Thatcherite 1990s. Contributors include Neal Ascherson, Sarah Benton, Rosalind Brunt, Beatrix Campbell, Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, Charlie Leadbeater, Robin Murray and Göran Therborn. Published by Lawrence and Wishart, in association with Marxism Today, we are offering this book as a pre-publication offer, post-free at £9.95.

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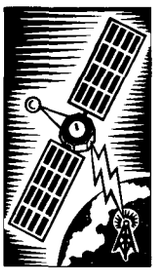

about: 'Do you prefer swallowing it or spitting it out?' and I say: 'Look, it wouldn't enter my mind to let someone ejaculate in my mouth anyway!'

Jenni Have any of you considered the option of celibacy?

(Laughter)

Jenni Do you think knowing about Aids has changed your attitudes towards *relationships* – whether you have a monogamous relationship or are promiscuous?

Alan From a personal point of view, the length of my relationships is the same. But looking around I'd say people are more often in long-term relationships.

Chris I find it hard to imagine making some conscious decision. I would take some convincing that sexual desire could be restructured so quickly. And you can't make a relationship last longer just because you're afraid of Aids.

Denise *I don't think* Aids has changed how I feel about sex, or relationships, really.

Chris Do you ever have intercourse without a condom?

Denise Yes, I have. And when we did talk about condoms it would be a question of: 'Well, you don't want to get pregnant, do you?' It wouldn't be: 'You don't want to get Aids, do you?'

Chris Do you always use a condom?

Alan Yes.

Chris And is that because of Aids?

Alan Yes, usually. To be honest with you, it's always discussed, and it's usually a joke. It's just more of a fun exercise than anything.

Chris And at what point do you normally start talking about it?

Denise As a chat-up line!

Alan In a way it's not so far from the truth. If you start actually discussing condoms it looks like you're going to have sex. But what do you think if a guy says he doesn't want to use one? Have you ever had that?

Jenni Yes.

Amanda What did you say?

Jenni It's extremely difficult: in the heat of the moment it's probably the last thing on your mind. When you first meet someone it's still hard to broach the subject, to insinuate they might carry Aids. And how would you feel if someone did the same to you?

Chris Why do you think, if men get to that moment, the idea of using the condom is so awful?

Jenni So many men I know really dislike condoms. It's to do with the macho thing: real men don't use condoms. The guy's got to put the condom on with you watching. It questions their sexuality and prowess.

Chris But if they refused would you fuck anyway?

Amanda Yes. It's either that, or you say, 'Get the fuck out of my bed'.

Robert I don't see why you can't be honest with someone before you get to the bedroom.

Denise Well it depends on the situation really. I mean, you go to a party, get drunk, end up in a bedroom with someone, fumbling around: you don't want to know their life history.

Chris I associate condoms with fucking, with a particular kind of sex. So although the condom isn't going to turn me on in itself, by a sort of association it's 'eroticised'!

Amanda I think what it requires is a kind of liberation, towards sexuality and desire. And I think we could get to the point where the extra layer of the condom could be part of that process.

Jenni Do you think more people are exploring different levels of sexuality now? I've noticed that more guys are open about the fact that they're scared about the way in which their sexuality is perceived by women – like 'taking the lead', the old 'performance' principle. Now they're more willing to try out different things.

Alan People now are talking about changing attitudes to sex, and about what you actually do when you go home with someone: the idea that you have to have penetrative sex to say that you've slept with someone.

Chris But do you feel the pressure to have penetrative sex is still there?

Alan No. I don't. I don't enjoy it so much as other things, to be honest.

Chris And does that ever cause problems? It seems you'd need to talk about that, with a woman.

Alan Yes, I would agree. But the people I've slept with, penetration wasn't that exciting compared to other things – or what they wanted to do.

Robert If you've been going out with someone for a number of months, do you still use condoms?

Lauren If you don't have a condom there, it's much more difficult to say to someone you know and have been out with: 'We've still got to use condoms.' It's like, 'Don't you trust me now?'

Jenni You get to a certain point where you think, 'It's not going to happen to me'. I feel the heterosexual community still think like that. Not wanting to know.

Caroline People make up their own rules about what they think is safe and not safe. I've had sex without a condom, and the guy was at one time an IV drug user, but I thought, 'It's ok as long as he doesn't come inside me'.

Amanda I wonder, even if the government were really straight with people about safer sex, whether we wouldn't still make our own rules. I've got to the point where I think: 'I'm 24, having sex, and that is what 1989 is about, and I'm going to do it anyway. And if my life ends in five years' time, then...'

Jenni There's an analogy with the risk of becoming pregnant. I mean, even given the availability of contraception, you're still going to take risks. I know very few people that are *always* rational.

Lauren Maybe Aids can be an excuse for avoiding the 60s' ethos that you have to be humping like a rabbit the whole time. You can actually take a bit of time to think about what you want.

Alan The line about the condom: 'Oh shit we haven't got one', actually can be a way of saying, 'Well, actually I don't want to have sex'.●

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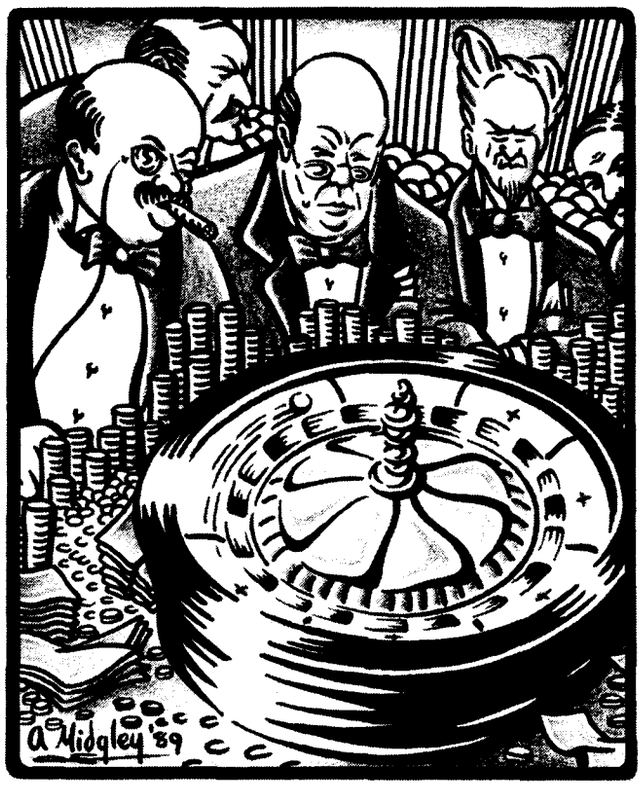
Geoff Mulgan looks inside the Casino Economy

Socialist Roulette



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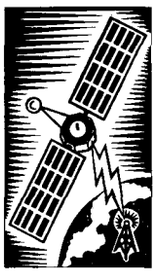

The relative decline of the British economy over the last century remains the central issue in British politics, prominent again as the Thatcherite miracle falters and a new recession looms.

Since the war innumerable forests have been sacrificed in the great debate about reversing decline. Arguments about macro-economic solutions (floating or fixed exchange rates, redistributions of income, tax incentives, trade protection...), micro-economic ones (loosening the labour-market, encouraging small businesses) and even cultural ones (fostering a spirit of enterprise) have never gone away. For the Left these have been given added spice by the argument about whether socialists should manage capitalism or overthrow it.

During the course of the 1980s the debate has shifted. Macro-economics is no longer seen as a tool of salvation. Fiscal and monetary conservatism are the order of the day. On the left a large gap has opened up which **Beyond The Casino Economy** *(Nicholas Costello, Jonathan Michie and Seumas Milne, Verso, pbk £8.95)* aims to fill, with the first exposition for 10 years of what a classic left economic strategy might look like, a strategy that uses economic policy as a tool of political transformation.

Prescriptive books on economic policy tend to consist of two parts. One is an analysis of how economies work. The second part provides the solutions. Sometimes the two parts make a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Sometimes a good analysis gives rise to bad solutions.

Beyond The Casino Economy is a classic example of the second type. It is in many ways a very impressive book, a detailed, socialistic analysis of recent economic history that is actually interested in facts. It provides a coherent analysis of the economic failures of Thatcherism, above all perhaps its failure to improve historical trends in productivity.

The weaknesses become apparent when the authors feel the need to add two political ingredients to the analysis. The book has been billed as a devastating critique of post-Fordism, but in fact the object of attack turns out to be a straw man. By seeing the post-Fordism as a naive faith in small firms, benign work processes and diversified markets, the authors give themselves an easy ride.

Yet their critique includes much common sense. They point out the trends towards concentration and standardisation, particularly in high-technology areas. They highlight the economies of scale and scope in research ($2 billion to develop a new telecommunications switch) and production ($300m to build a new semiconductor plant) which favour larger firms. And they point to the globalisation of capital, and explain why a growth in small firms need not imply a weakening of the position of large ones.

What they fail to recognise is that the more sophisticated proponents of post-Fordism argue not that standardisation has been replaced by diversity but rather that we are now witnessing a period of very uneven and contradictory change and a new interdependence of standardisation and flexibility.

Common standards in computing sustain highly-competitive industries. Standardisation of parts of the production process allows for greater variety in end products. In the case of France's Minitel, which the authors cite as a prime example of sucessful state planning, the crucial lesson is that its success depended on combining the planned provision of a standardised infrastructure, including 4m terminals, with the freest-possible market in the provision of services, of which there are now over 11,000.

Since the book chooses to highlight telecommunications and computing, the weaknesses are significant. For these are areas where the Left has strong cards to play. They are industries heavily dependent on international planning for common standards and uses of radio spectrum. Markets tend to be inefficient in the provision of infrastructures (witness the Channel Tunnel) and in creating devices that can communicate with each other (witness the disastrous incompatibilities and wastage of the computer industry). But any convincing left strategy needs to recognise both where the state is effective (creating infrastructures, guaranteeing universal service), and where it is ineffective (developing new services, responding to consumer interests).

The argument remains too blunt. So although it's true that the nation-state remains the most important mechanism for economic policy, it is also important to recognise just how much its autonomy has been reduced. And although it's true that in the long run multinationals would have to come to terms with a socialist government in Britain, it is the height of political naivety not to recognise that in the short run they would do their utmost to destabilise it. The need to wrench out a programme for the Labour Left, couched in the familiar terms of the late 1960s and 1970s: nationalisation, control of the City, withdrawal from the EC, weakens the book as a whole. Despite the evident knowledge and sophistication, Bourbon leftism (learning nothing, forgetting nothing) creeps back.

This remains an important book. It's a useful antidote to the pervasive fatalism that assumes that there is no role for state intervention and political control of the economy. It's a good reminder that there are alternatives. But it's a first step and not a convincing programme or manifesto. It remains locked in the mindsets of the past. Four pages on planning for ecological balance feel like they've been parachuted in. There is no sense of why so many people want to work for themselves, of the creative role of small companies or why the revulsion against bureaucracy is present right across the world. Clearly we will need planning to avoid ecological catastrophe, and to avert the dangers of a casino economy. But it will not be the same as in the past, and the book with a viable alternative to deindustrialisation, collapsing currencies and chronic inequality is still waiting to be written.●

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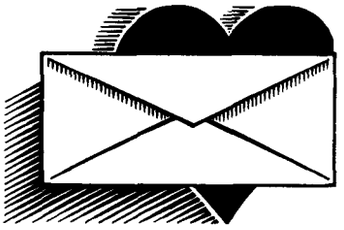

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We are pleased to announce the winner of the

Batman Competition

Jim Doherty

from Harrogate

The answers are:

1 Who created Batman?
Bob Kane

2 What happened to Robin in 'The Dark Knight Returns'?
Robin is female

3 What is Batman's real name?
Bruce Wayne

Jim's winning tie breaker was

"Batman subscribes to Marxism Today because . . . even a psychotic vigilante has to adapt to New Times.

Well done Jim, Bat Pack on the way.
Hard luck to all you other Batfans.

MT EVENTS

● **Marxism Today Discussion Groups** and events are now developing right across Britain. If you would like information and advice on starting up a discussion group in your area please contact, MT (Groups), 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. Tel: (01) 608 0265.

● **Bangor.** Marxism Today group now meeting every month. Next meeting, Thursday November 9th, 8pm at Bangor University Main Arts Building, College Rd. For further details contact Julian Bass (0286) 870 704 or George Pottle (0766) 830 000.

● **Sheffield:** Sheffield South CP, are now organising a Marxism Today Weekend Event. Entitled, "What's Left for Tomorrow: Social Living in the 1990s" it will take place 20/21 April, 1990. The theme will be the reconstructing of the social, and the regeneration of socialism. Offers of help and ideas are welcome from Marxism Today readers. Further info: John Salway, 100 Wayland Rd, Sheffield S11 8YE. Tel: (074) 680874.

● **Scotland:** Major Weekend Event being planned on the Scottish economy in Glasgow this November. Details; What's Left Collective, 13 Hampden Terrace, Glasgow G42. Tel: (041) 649 7433.

● **Islington:** "New Parties for New Times", a discussion on the form of political organisation needed for the 190s. Opened by Sarah Benton and Geoff Mulgan. November 23rd, 8pm at Islington Central Library, 2 Fieldway Crescent, N5, nearest tube, Highbury and Islington. Details: (01) 354 4248. Organised by Islington Marxism Today Group.

● **Haringey:** "Designs for Living", a discussion on Prince Charles and the great architectural debate. Opened by Richard Hill, an architect and writer. Tuesday November 21st, 8pm at Hornsey Library, Haringey Park, London N8. Organised by Haringey Marxism Today Group, info (01) 384 8915.

● **Ilford:** Marxism Today group meets every month. Next meeting, November 23rd. Further details, contact Paul Kaufman, (01) 478 8237.

RATES AND DATES

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This is an example of a semi-display advertisement. It costs £10.00 per column centimetre. So because this is 3cms deep it costs £30.00 plus 15% VAT. Please make all cheques payable to Marxism Today.

Box numbers are free. Entries and replies are strictly confidential. When answering a box number, write your letter to the advertiser, then seal it in an envelope and mark the box no. in pencil in the top left-hand corner. Put a stamp on this envelope. Then place it in another envelope, put a stamp on that and send it to: Marketplace, Marxism Today, 16 St John St., London EC1M 4AY.

Deadline for the December issue:
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Clive James

I hate Clive James. Smart arse, bald, self-obsessed, self-indulgent.

Clive James. Be bitchy. Think about it. Well, he's a fat, bald Australian. No, that's not really bitchy. Not enough. OK, let's think about James and think about what he's done, then we can be really bitchy. Well...

Well, he was the seminal television critic, the first person to review the crap; he reads difficult Russian novels in the original (does he avoid the easy ones?); he has written memoirs, novels, essays, collections of criticisms and, and then there's the tv. Chat shows, documentaries, interviews, schminterviews. We're missing what? Records. He wrote the lyrics to eight Pete Atkins albums in the 70s.

I'm beginning to think that being bitchy about what he's done isn't such a good idea. So look. Why do I hate him?

The bald, fat Australian thing is a non-starter. He's 50. Bald and fat is regulation issue. Australian? Possibly.

'Clive has a chat show and who he does he have on? Chomsky, Sontag and Steiner. And why? Anything to sell? Yes. Clive's brain. They're there to sell him'

But no. Forget the Australian angle. It might work for some people, but no. Some of my best...

OK. Let's take a different tack. Let's try a cheap shot.

What's he remembered for? Laughing at stupid Japanese folk doing stupid things on stupid Japanese programmes. Drinking 480 pints of water and not being allowed to have a piss. Pissing ourselves. Because it's funny. It may be a touch racist (I don't think it is, but there you go) but it's funny. Idiot television is idiot television and laughing at it is laughing at idiot television. Moaning about racism is simply missing the point.

We can probably get more mileage from the sexist angle. Those leering, lecherous things like '... and the calendar girls' and '... meets Hugh Hefner' can be dismissed as an old man's fantasy easily enough. But if he spends every waking moment telling (yelling) about how smart he is, then, well, it's not really on.

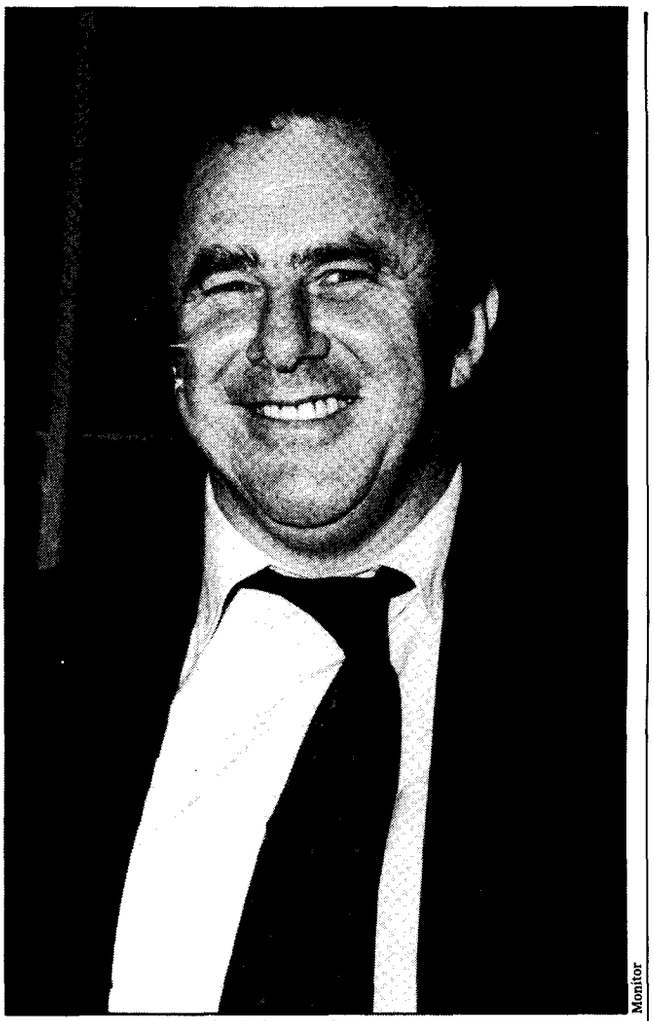
Be honest. This I can cope with. Maybe I shouldn't, but I can. So I ask my friends. 'Clive James. What do you think?' And they all hate him. All of them. 'Oh, he's very clever', they say. But they all hate him.

There's that word. The key word. Clever. The smug, unctuous cleverness. Everyone else has a chat show and you know why the guests are there. It's a sales gig. Fine. Our Clive has a chat show and who does he have on? Chomsky, Sontag and Steiner. And why? Anything to sell? Yes. Clive's brain. They're there to sell him. And I keep seeing these large subtitles flashing (sneering) across the screen: 'I am very clever. I am cleverer than you. You are not very clever.'

The books. Take the first novel, *Beautiful Creatures* – can't imagine why it was called that. A fairly workmanlike sub-Martin Amis-type effort. But are we content with that? No, we're not. Tacked on the end, there's a month-long appendix telling you what it all means. Explaining all the references. Really. Who cares?

But he's popular with the people who really count. The punters. Why? Is it something to do with the way he looks? Be honest. He doesn't look good. He looks bald and fat. He doesn't sound good. He sounds smug and self-satisfied. But still, it's there. He's popular. So why?

Remember that Jane Fonda thing? Her sitting there (looking like she does) saying how age is kinder to men than women. Him sitting there (looking like he does) agreeing. An in-joke, a wry laugh. And who did we laugh with? We laughed with him because we all look like him. Not her.



Monitor

Clive James: Can it be just his looks?

The thing with Clive James is that, well, there are two things. The punters thing is that he's funny. He sets himself up and he entertains. They like him.

The writers/critics thing is that they want to be him. To write books and tv programmes and really bad poems called things like Charles Charming something or other beginning with a 'c' (because it's always alliterative) and novels and all those other things. And they want to get away with it. Why him? Why does he get away with it? Why not me? He's fat and bald and ugly. I'm not.

Incidentally, I hate Michael Ignatieff more than I hate James.

So is that it? Everybody hates him because they want to be him? And everyone who doesn't hate him watches him. Is that it? (Forget the books. I honestly can't imagine who reads his books. Honestly.)

OK. Be bitchy. Let's try some of those oh-so-witty putdowns, like that famous one: he looks like a condom full of peanuts. No, I can't even do that. He'd do it better. But ok, let's try this. He's a fat, ugly bastard. Or here's another one. He's a bald, ugly bastard. We're really getting into this now. We could go for fat and bald in one almighty putdown. I hate Clive James. Smart-arse, bald, self-obsessed, self-indulgent. And I haven't even mentioned the word jealous. Not once.●

Jeremy Novick

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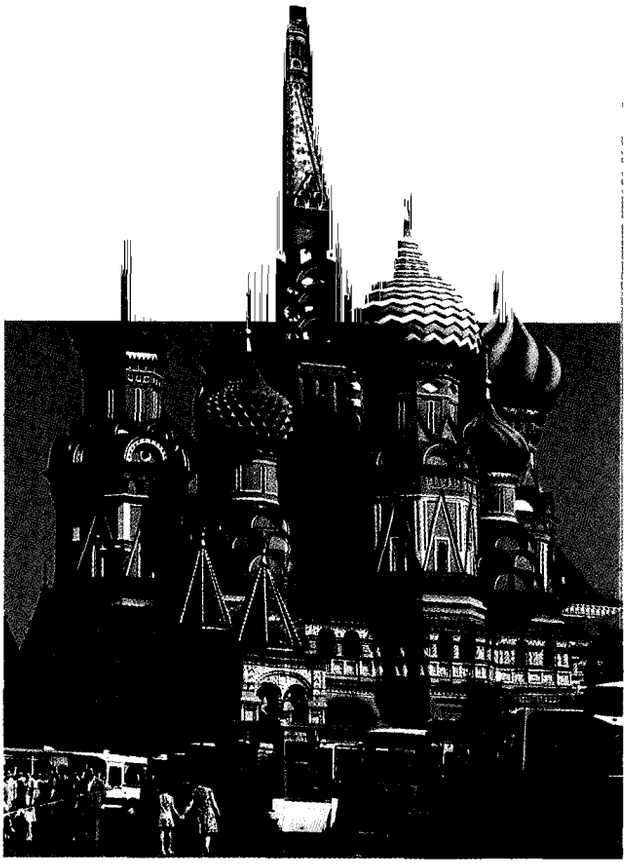

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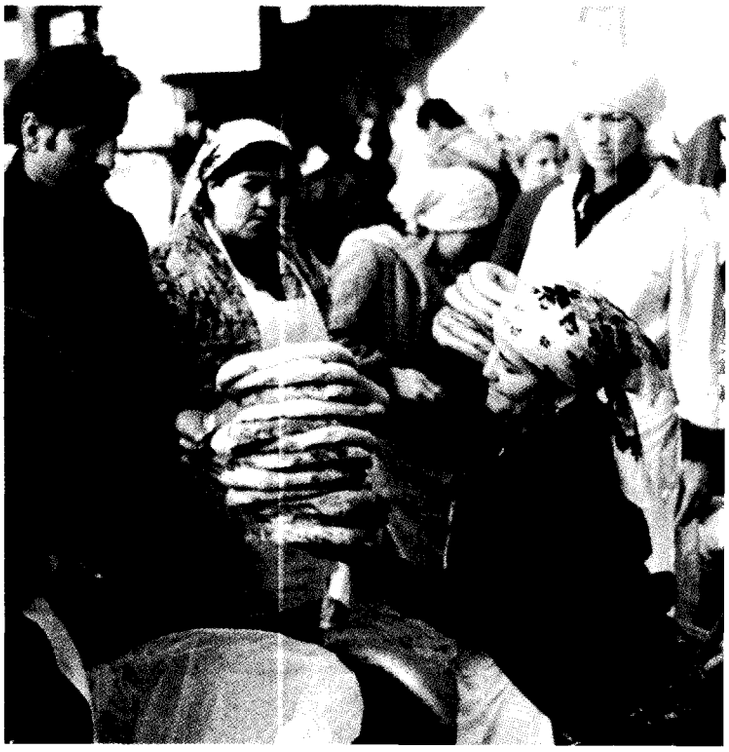

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